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A Social and Economic History of Music in Late Eighteenth Century Anglo-Indian Society

IAN WOODFIELD



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To Thérèse

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The major collections of Anglo-Indian letters discussed in this study are in the National Library of Wales and the British Library. I acknowledge with gratitude the assistance of staff there. Above all the India Office Library at Blackfriars was my haunt during vacations for many years, and the efficiency of its reader services was much appreciated. Major Williams of the National Trust arranged for me to visit Powis Castle to look at a collection of music belonging to the Clive family. Other assistance was provided by the Gloucestershire Record Office, the Somerset Record Office, the Newspaper Library at Colindale, the Victoria and Albert Museum. From the inception of this project, Bruce Phillips at Oxford University Press was most supportive and encouraging, and generous financial support has been provided by the Queen's University of Belfast.

I. W.

Preface

'Of all kinds of musical activity the least documented is, understandably, domestic music-making. At its extent and its social spread in England during the eighteenth century we can only guess.' Thus Stanley Sadie in *Music in Britain: The Eighteenth Century*.[1] Notwithstanding the lack of first-hand accounts by amateur musicians, it is accepted that the growth of recreational music-making among the middle classes, now an economically powerful group, influenced profoundly the development of musical culture in eighteenth-century England. Newly affluent and with leisure time to devote to their hobby, musical amateurs influenced almost every aspect of professional and commercial musical activity: they provided the audiences for the emerging traditions of the public concert; their need for tuition increased the opportunities for music teachers, stimulating a great influx of Italian and German musicians; their appetite for new keyboard instruments led to the emergence of London as the leading centre for the technical development and the commercial retail of pianofortes; and their demand for new repertoire stimulated a phenomenal increase in the publication of easy domestic music. The growing vitality of musical life in London is easy to document, but the effects in the shires were as obvious: musical clubs and societies flourished; circulating music libraries were set up; 'country' music retailers established businesses, acting as agents for the major London firms; systems of transport for the carriage of instruments were put in place; and an informal annual calendar of special events, effectively music festivals, came into being.

All of this activity has left a wealth of evidence, mainly 'public' or 'semi-public' in character, in the form of newspaper advertisements, publishers' catalogues, minute books of societies, and subscription lists. Material of this kind is certainly of great value in tracing the development of middle-class musical tastes. Analysis of the repertoire of provincial music societies, for example, illustrates an undiminished enthusiasm for Corelli throughout the century, and the successive phases in the reception of Haydn's music can be followed through in newspaper advertisements of the programmes of leading concert organizations. The musical preferences of more specific groups are also amenable to study. In a recent account of the rise of 'ancient' music, lists of patrons of one of the main societies devoted to its promotion have been shown to reflect the influence of class and political allegiance on support

[1] H. Diack Johnstone and R. Fiske, eds., *Music in Britain: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 313.

for the movement.[2] Names on the subscription lists of individual publications appear to be useful in determining such matters as the geographical range, the gender balance, the social status, and even the professional occupations of the subscribers to particular genres.

Yet useful though all these sources undoubtedly are, they relate chiefly to the 'public' activities of amateur musicians, as concert-goers, musical society members, and purchasers of instruments and music. It has proved much harder to gather first-hand information on the activities central to their 'private' musical lives, such as the music lesson, the informal domestic soirée, and the formal concert party. One result of the failure to locate accounts of these kinds of domestic music-making has been a significant imbalance in the quantity and quality of evidence relating to 'public' and 'private' musical activity, and it is arguable that this has adversely affected discussion of eighteenth-century English musical culture. The problem is especially acute in provincial musical history. The growth of musical life in many towns, from Bath to Belfast, has been ably documented, using the evidence of newspapers which, during the course of the century, devoted an increasing amount of space to subscription series, individual benefit concerts, charity oratorio performances, the retail trade, and disputes involving musicians.[3] In addition to the newspaper evidence, the minute books and programme records of musical societies sometimes survive. The weight of 'public' documentation is usually impressive, and yet, to counterbalance this, the evidence of the 'private' musical world, which may well have been of at least equal significance in both cultural and economic terms, typically consists of brief allusions in letters, sometimes only one or two for the whole century. If there is only the scantiest of documentation of the private concert series, the most formal manifestation of domestic musical activity, then it is not surprising that the less structured events, the music lessons, the morning quartet parties, the after-dinner glee singing, should remain largely hidden from view. And this phenomenon is by no means confined to England; the lack of hard information about the domestic musical activities of wealthy Viennese patrons has made analysis of Mozart's declining financial position in the late 1780s very problematic.

In an important study, Richard Leppert has recently attempted to fill this void.[4] In seeking evidence of music-making among the English upper classes, he first examined letters and diaries, but found the material disappointingly inconsequential: 'written references to music by contemporaneous practitioners were many but almost invariably brief (of the sort, "We had some music last night").' During the course of his study the point is developed: 'We can infer a good deal about amateurs' musical tastes and talents, but for the most part we must do so without benefit of the written comments of the practitioners themselves (whether male or female), and only occasionally from their auditors. Few accounts speak in more than one or two

[2] W. Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 158–67.

[3] K. E. James, 'Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Bath', Ph.D. thesis (University of London, 1987); R. R. Johnston, 'Concerts in the Musical Life of Belfast to 1874', Ph.D. thesis (Queen's University of Belfast, 1996).

[4] R. Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

sentences about a given musical event or assess either music or musicianship.' He therefore turned his attention to two other kinds of evidence: conversation pieces—pictures of wealthy men and women at their music, very numerous, very charming; and courtesy books—manuals of behaviour, in which the comic vies with the indefensible for attention. Both paintings and behaviour manuals, Leppert argues, presented an 'image' of music and its practice which actively reinforced the dominant ideologies of class and gender. In paintings, musical amateurs are thus *made to look* a certain way; men are repeatedly shown in poses of studied indifference to music, while women droop over their pianofortes in passive postures, determined by the need to present an image of submissive domesticity. Although one reviewer objected to the apparent reduction of the role of the artist to that of a mere cipher, the unconscious signifier of social hierarchy, nonetheless, many of the selected images certainly seem to express an ideological view of gender.[5] The extreme misogyny which affects the discussion of women musicians in courtesy books speaks for itself. Yet the existence of a published tradition of prescriptive writing about behaviour, whether seventeenth-century Puritan sermons or eighteenth-century courtesy manuals, tells us nothing about whether such advice was actually followed. At times, the frequency with which a prescription was repeated, and the extremity with which it was argued, seem to point to the conclusion that it was not widely adopted. Here, a personal anecdote comes to mind. Our family, growing up in London during the 1950s, greatly enjoyed a slim, red-covered 'pocket book' of etiquette. Howls of merriment greeted the author's learned commentary 'upon the correct conveyance of soup to the mouth', his advice on the number of inches that would constitute a polite raising of the hat, and the mechanically ingenious sequence of manœuvres that would enable peas to be lifted on a fork, prongs curving downward, without the embarrassment of small green objects bouncing across the impeccable linen. There is no reason to suppose that the book represented anything other than some current (or recent) 'standards', nor, indeed, that many sought to follow its advice. And yet in this family it came to be regarded as simply ludicrous. How then were eighteenth-century commentaries on the appropriate place of music in the lives of women, usually demeaning, often offensive in tone, regarded? Were they accepted without question as the natural order of things? Did they cause resentment? Were they the object of ridicule? As important, did men and women, the old and the young, think alike on these issues? If there ever was a 'golden age' of orthodoxy upon these matters, when did attitudes begin to change? To put it another way, the reception history of an ideology may be as significant as its dogmatic content. In Leppert's study, troubling questions emerge at this critical interface between ideology and real life. That eighteenth-century courtesy books had a serious problem with the concept of boys studying music, and the artistic conventions underlying conversation pieces with the depiction of men actively engaged with music, seems indisputable; yet any implication that the eighteenth-century Englishman was reluctant to play instruments seems wholly at variance with other kinds of evidence, which suggests that this period was the great age of the enthusiastic male amateur. Throughout the cen-

[5] P. Thane, Review of Leppert, *Music and Image*, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 116 (1991), 135–6.

tury, but especially in the 1780s and 1790s, a large quantity of easy music for violin and flute, instruments played almost exclusively by men, was published. At a basic level at least, musical literacy amongst men must have been widespread. Leppert cites a short list of evaluations of eminent upper-class musical amateurs published in the London press, which, in its sharply divergent evaluation of accomplishment by gender, does indeed seem to derive from prevailing stereotypes.[6] Yet there is no significance at all in its numerical brevity. It would be easy to compile a list of male amateur players in eighteenth-century England, running to many hundreds, if not thousands.

The idea for the present study came from reading the unpublished correspondence of several members of the Anglo-Indian Fowke family. In view of the prevailing wisdom, it was striking to find that the private letters of individual amateur musicians should provide evidence of real interest. Having subsequently read the correspondence of a more extended network of families, I reached the conclusion that, far from ignoring the subject of music, many English amateurs in the eighteenth century wrote about their interest at least briefly, while a few described their hobby with great passion and insight. One explanation of the previous failure to find much material of this kind is that too much emphasis has been put on searching through volumes of *published* letters. It is certainly true that in correspondence intended or subsequently selected for publication, references to musical activities are generally uninformative. Few musical amateurs imagined that the world at large wished to know of the triumphs and tribulations of their domestic music-making. As significantly, few nineteenth- or early twentieth-century historians have shown much interest in the domestic musical activities of significant historical figures. There is scarcely a hint in the published biographies of Robert Clive, for example, that he and his wife were keen musical enthusiasts, or that their private letters contain passages on this subject. Another is that amateur music-making might be discussed more fully in the correspondence of Anglo-Indians than elsewhere. Long periods of tedium on the sea voyage out to India, followed by a colonial life-style, in which isolation and boredom were serious problems, especially for women, might have made music-making appear a more attractive pastime than it would have been in England. Not a few young men and women admitted to taking up their musical instrument in India with a new degree of fervour. Periods of separation from loved ones in England, which a career with the East India Company was likely to involve, inspired many to record in some detail the circumstances of their daily lives for the benefit of those back home. The results for the historian are more often than not disappointing, but when musical knowledge, descriptive ability, and, crucially, self-awareness come together as they do in the Fowke correspondence, a fascinating portrait of amateur musical life comes to light.

Until recently, musicologists have shown little awareness of India as a major resource for the study of eighteenth-century English culture, but this situation has been changing rapidly. Head outlined briefly some of the main themes of this study:

[6] Leppert, *Music and Image*, 108.

the growth of Calcutta concert life; the place of 'ancient' music in India; and the Anglo-Indian interest in Indian music.[7] He made use of the Fowke correspondence, but not the related Ormathwaite manuscripts. Edwards has discussed the career of Captain Thomas Williamson, who wrote a useful guide to India, which included advice on the transport of musical instruments.[8] In a detailed study of music in the circle of Sir William Jones, Tolley considered the early reputation of Haydn in India.[9] Leppert has discussed the role of Anglo-Indian portraiture in the presentation of imperial values.[10] The history of 'Hindostannie' airs, arrangements of Indian tunes in a European manner, has attracted particular interest. Bor considered the part played by these arrangements, together with early scholarly studies of Indian music, in the early history of ethnomusicology.[11] My own work has focused on the role of women in the collection of Indian tunes,[12] on the problems of transcribing and arranging them,[13] and on the role of keyboard instruments in the process of transcription.[14] The English encounter with Indian music in the 1780s also provides the starting point for Farrell's wide-ranging survey of Western perceptions of Indian music.[15] Finally, a chance reference in the Clive correspondence to a private concert involving the Mozart children in 1765 has demonstrated the potential value of this seemingly peripheral field of study, even in mainstream areas of musicological enquiry.[16] All in all, the time seems right for a full-scale study.

The main conclusion that I have reached after looking at many vivid accounts of the musical world of the Anglo-Indian community in the late eighteenth century is that gender was indeed a powerful and formative influence on the conduct of musical life. This study will thus not deny the existence of an ideology of gender, as proposed by Leppert, nor will it refuse to acknowledge its influence, rather it will seek to explore the complexities of its reception in the lives of amateur musicians.

7 R. Head, 'Corelli in Calcutta: Colonial Music-Making in India during the 17th and 18th Centuries', *Early Music*, 13 (1985), 548–53.

8 O. Edwards, 'Captain Williamson's Compositions: Fashionable Music by an Army Officer', *Music Review*, 42 (1981), 116–29.

9 T. Tolley, 'Music in the Circle of Sir William Jones: A Contribution to the History of Haydn's Early Reputation', *Music & Letters*, 73 (1992), 525–50. See also I. Woodfield, 'Haydn Symphonies in Calcutta', *Music & Letters*, 75 (1994), 141–3.

10 R. Leppert, 'Music, Domestic Life and Cultural Chauvinism: Images of British Subjects at Home in India', in R. Leppert and S. McClary, eds., *Music and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 63–104.

11 J. Bor, 'The Rise of Ethnomusicology: Sources on Indian Music *c.*1780–*c.*1890', *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 20 (1988), 51–73.

12 I. Woodfield, 'The "Hindostannie Air": English Attempts to Understand Indian Music in the Late Eighteenth Century', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 119 (1994), 189–211.

13 I. Woodfield, 'Collecting Indian Songs in 18th-Century Lucknow: Problems of Transcription', *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 3 (1994), 73–88.

14 I. Woodfield, 'A Harpsichord on the Banks of the Ganges: English Keyboard Instruments and the Collection of "Hindostannie" Airs' (forthcoming).

15 G. Farrell, *Indian Music and the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

16 I. Woodfield, 'New Light on the Mozarts' London Visit: A Private Concert with Manzuoli', *Music & Letters*, 76 (1995), 187–208.

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A Note on Conventions

The term 'Anglo-Indian' is used exclusively in its original sense, that is, to refer to British people living, or having lived, in India rather than to people of mixed race.

Geographical locations are given in the form by which they were most commonly known to Anglo-Indians in the late eighteenth century. Thus: Benares (not Banaras or Varanasi); Oudh (not Awadh).

Spelling in eighteenth-century documents, both of Anglo-Indian terminology and more generally, is often inconsistent. I have transcribed documents in their original spelling, reserving the term '*sic*' for cases where the meaning might otherwise be uncertain. Punctuation, however, especially in the Fowke correspondence, has been modernized.

Abbreviations

GRO	Gloucestershire Record Office
NLW	National Library of Wales
OIOC	Oriental and India Office Collections, British Library

Introduction

After the granting of its charter in 1600, the East India Company sent out ships to India every year with a view to establishing regular commerce. Music played a prominent part in these early missions, with consorts of musicians acting as diplomatic 'extras' to ambassadors, and lavish keyboard instruments being transported to India as presentation gifts to Mughal rulers.[1] Having been granted the right to trade, the Company set up its first permanent settlement in the flourishing port of Surat, and this was followed by the opening of many small stations, to manage the so-called 'country' trade. It was difficult to sell European products in India (other than luxury goods to the European community there), and it was only through engaging in local trade that the Company was able to finance shipments back to Europe. In the latter part of the seventeenth century, the larger stations or 'factories' as they were widely known began to develop a musical life almost multi-cultural in character, which made prominent use of Indian dancers and musicians. On public occasions, such as the annual parade to mark the birthday of the sovereign, it was the practice to hire a full 'naubat'. Only in the mid-eighteenth century did London officials begin to quibble over the cost of the elephants.[2]

The early eighteenth century saw the focus of the Company's activity shift steadily away from Surat and Bombay across to Bengal, where Calcutta, effectively an English urban creation on Indian soil, was founded. During the first half of the eighteenth century the European population of Calcutta was small. Marshall has estimated that around fifty covenanted servants were employed by the East India Company in 1710, and still only about seventy in 1750.[3] Covenanted servants occupied one of four grades: an individual following a successful career path would enter as a writer (£5 per annum), rising five years later to the rank of factor (£15 per annum), attaining at three-yearly intervals thereafter posts as junior merchant (£30 per annum) and senior merchant (£40 per annum). These salaries were low, and even with expenses, the average annual emoluments of a writer are estimated at £34, those of a senior merchant at £225.[4] As yet the army was also small—in the early eighteenth century a few officers in command of several hundred men. In addition to the military and civilian personnel on the Company payroll, there were private individ-

[1] I. Woodfield, 'The Keyboard Recital in Oriental Diplomacy, 1520–1620', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 115 (1990), 33–62.

[2] I. Woodfield, *English Musicians in the Age of Exploration* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1995), 240–1.

[3] P. J. Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 15.

[4] Ibid. 10, 159.

uals such as free merchants. Overall, there can have been no more than a few hundred Europeans resident in Calcutta, a population too small and lacking in disposable resources to support any kind of public musical culture.

The spectacular change in the fortunes of the East India Company in the mid-eighteenth century is so well known as to require little comment. The background to the assumption of political power by the Company lay in the decline of the Mughal Empire. The relatively stable rule of the four 'great' Mughals, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jehan, and Aurangzib, gave way to a period of increasing uncertainty, and a power vacuum began to develop. A major threat to the Mughals was posed by the rise of the Marathas, and there were challenges from other groups such as the Afghans. With their small but comparatively well-trained military forces, the dominant European powers, England and France, began to find themselves involved in determining the outcome of local struggles. The fall of Calcutta to Seraja-daulah in 1756, its recapture by Clive in 1757, followed by the subsequent victory at Plassey, precipitated the decisive shift in the balance of power. The Company found itself, almost by accident rather than design (as it has seemed to some), the ultimate arbiter of power in the region, and after the French had failed to regain lost ground, it had no serious European rival.

The scramble for wealth during the ten years or so after Plassey has been the subject of intense scrutiny by historians. With effective political power in Bengal passing to the East India Company, unparalleled opportunities for making money opened up. Large fortunes were acquired effortlessly, some simply as 'gifts' from Indian rulers. A Select Committee of the House of Commons investigating this abuse identified £2,169,665 as having been handed over in Bengal between 1757 and 1765, but Marshall believes the actual total to have been of the order of two and a half million.[5] What was remarkable was not just the sums involved, but the speed with which they could be acquired. A period of work in India had hitherto offered the possibility of reasonable prosperity; now it held out for the lucky few the chance of a huge fortune, acquired with little effort. John Walsh, whose relatives will feature prominently in this study, acquired five lakhs (about £50,000) from a 'flying visit' to India.[6] A lakh, which consisted of 100,000 rupees (about £10,000), was the basic unit of a large gift; it gave rise to Clive's celebrated, if almost certainly apocryphal, toast to life in Bengal: 'alas and alack-a-day!'[7] Thus was born the legend of the 'nabob', the Anglo-Indian with a fabulous fortune, acquired in the most unscrupulous manner imaginable. The sums amassed by Clive himself were unrivalled, but scores of others returned to England very wealthy men. At the rate at which it was being plundered, this gold-seam of easy wealth was not likely to last long. Moreover, the outcry which such behaviour caused in England led the Company to act vigorously in curtailing the worst abuses.

It was quickly realized that the Company's assumption of administrative responsibility in Bengal would necessitate the recruitment of a much larger work-force. There was thus a rapid growth in the European population of Calcutta. By 1773, the

[5] Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes*, 179. [6] Ibid. 165. [7] Ibid. 164.

number of covenanted servants had nearly quadrupled to 250, as a result of much larger annual intakes.[8] At this point, the rise came to an abrupt halt as the Company realized that it had over-recruited, and was now experiencing difficulty in finding work for all its new entrants. The increase in the army was even greater: in 1763 there were 114 officers, rising to 500 in 1769, and over 1,000 by 1784. There were equivalent increases in the numbers of chaplains and surgeons. Numbers of private individuals continued to increase although at a less spectacular rate. Another less easily quantifiable growth (but one of great importance to the history of music in the city) was in the number of European women. By the 1780s, wives, daughters, and unattached women were travelling out to India in much larger numbers. In total, by the end of the eighteenth century, the European population had risen to at least several thousand.

The overall rise in the number of Europeans was accompanied by significant improvements in the remuneration offered to Company employees. Once the old abuses associated with private trade had been brought under a measure of control, it was recognized that regular salaries would have to be increased if good applicants were to be attracted to the Indian service. It was now prudent to ensure that salary levels in India were above those available to the occupants of similar positions at home. An 'Indian' career was no longer an option suitable only for younger sons or the 'black sheep' of families. Before 1757, it is estimated that the seventy or more Company servants received on average £150 per annum; by 1774 there were 238 on an average of £455 per annum, while in 1783 there were 286 on an average of £2,261. Army pay was less generous, but the twenty or so colonels and lieutenant-colonels and sixty majors earned over £1,000. Captains of sepoy battalions received £500 and subalterns £250.[9] A regime of low salaries for most and spectacular gains for a few had given way to a period of more general affluence. Bengal now had a large and reasonably well-paid civil service, membership of which would no longer open up the prospect of an automatic fortune, but which did guarantee a relatively secure income.

The increasing size, stability, and affluence of Calcutta during the 1770s and 1780s offered exceptional opportunities for retailers. Newspapers testify to the vigour of the market for fashionable goods, including instruments and music, among the European residents of the city. The line of supply to India was sustained by Company ships, which usually took no more than five months to make the journey round the Cape of Good Hope. Officers were entitled to a 'share' of a voyage, that is, an allocation of space, in which consignments of musical instruments could be stored. Once custom duties had been paid, the merchandise would enter the cut-and-thrust world of the Calcutta retail trade with its bazaars, auction houses, and commission warehouses. There were some established businesses, such as Burrell & Gould and Paxton & Cockrell, but as typical were the make-a-quick-buck merchants. Business concerns opened, closed, moved location, or changed method of operation with bewildering speed. Some factors worked to the advantage of the

[8] Ibid. 180. [9] Ibid. 181.

retailer. The need to keep up with London fashion, for example, was an important element in the psyche of Calcutta's European residents, and this fuelled a constant demand for the latest fashions, in pianofortes as much as in dresses. Yet there were also negative factors. The growth of affluence in Calcutta was by no means a uniformly ascending curve; the city's economy went through a series of cyclical depressions, and the early 1780s in particular was a difficult period. Margaret Fowke, writing as a consumer, described the situation in a letter of 29 June 1783:

> A Portuguese ship is lately arrived with the largest and most complete cargo from England . . . it is not yet known how it will be sold. There are carriages of all kinds, books, wines, musical instruments, in short, large quantities of every thing in the world in it. But the settlement has no money. The company is so largely in arrears to all the servants, the contractors are obliged to advance money of their own to carry on business.[10]

On another occasion, she reported that Calcutta inhabitants had developed the habit of merely window-shopping.[11]

Another problem for retailers was the existence of an exceptionally vigorous second-hand market in musical instruments. A notable feature of the European population was its rapid turnover. The desire to return home once a reasonable level of affluence had been achieved, together with the frequency of postings to other stations, meant that Calcutta's population was in a state of constant flux. One citizen complained in 1784, when there was a particularly large exodus: 'People have grown so very tired of Calcutta, that there is hardly a fixed resident in the place.'[12] It was simply uneconomic for anyone returning to London to pay for the transportation of heavy goods back to England; furniture, large musical instruments, and indeed anything bulky, was usually sold off for whatever could be got. This second-hand market was further augmented by the exceptionally high mortality rate. One estimate suggests that 57 per cent of all Company civil servants recruited between 1707 and 1775 died in India.[13] The consequence of large numbers of deaths and departures was a deluge of goods entering circulation second hand.

Notwithstanding the existence of this flourishing market for used goods, the retailer of new keyboard instruments still enjoyed one overwhelming advantage: of all the artefacts exported to India, pianos and harpsichords were by far the most problematic in their maintenance, owing largely to the destruction wrought by the climate on soundboards and other wooden parts. Guidebooks to India sometimes offered helpful tips on how instruments should be 'prepared' for India, ranging from the draconian, such as the cementing or nailing of support batons to soundboards, to the ineffective, such as the judicious use of heavy blankets. All this was to little avail, and Calcutta remained the perfect market for the keyboard retailer, whose latest products were fashionable, but liable to collapse overnight through circumstances demonstrably outside the control of any human agency.

[10] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E4, 143.
[11] Fowke MS E4, 202; Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke, 12 July 1783.
[12] Fowke MS E5, 43; Joseph Fowke to Margaret Fowke, 6 Sept. 1784.
[13] Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes*, 218–19.

The growth in the size and affluence of Calcutta's population began to attract the attention of professional musicians in Europe. In the first half of the century, there were few opportunities to earn a living from music in India other than in the band employed by the governor. As reports of the fortunes acquired during the 1750s began to spread, a growing number of free-lance musicians were attracted to the city in the hope of lucrative work. The musicians who sailed eastwards were mostly low in status, mere 'fiddlers', who scraped a living from a free-lance existence, organizing concerts, playing at private engagements, teaching, supplying strings and music, repairing instruments, and in many cases taking on non-musical employment to supplement an inadequate level of income, or to make ends meet during a temporary crisis. Calcutta, as 'Golden Goa' had been two centuries earlier, was an extraordinarily cosmopolitan city. Its communities included French, German, Dutch, Swedish, and Danish people, and there were large groups of Greeks, Armenians, and Portuguese. Musicians of many different nationalities are recorded, which makes the absence of the Italian music fraternity, so dominant in London, very noticeable. The reluctance of Italian musicians to travel to India is clear enough evidence of how low the East in general ranked in the market for professionals. Within this diverse musical community, there was an unwritten hierarchy, organized along racial lines, with the Germans and British above the 'Portuguese', who included musicians of mixed race. Eventually, individuals of greater substance, such as William Hamilton Bird, who collected and published Indian airs in the 1780s, gave a greater measure of respectability to the profession in Calcutta. It is difficult to follow through the careers of the stream of lesser musicians, who flit through the pages of the Calcutta newspapers, only to disappear without trace, having apparently regarded India merely as a temporary source of employment.

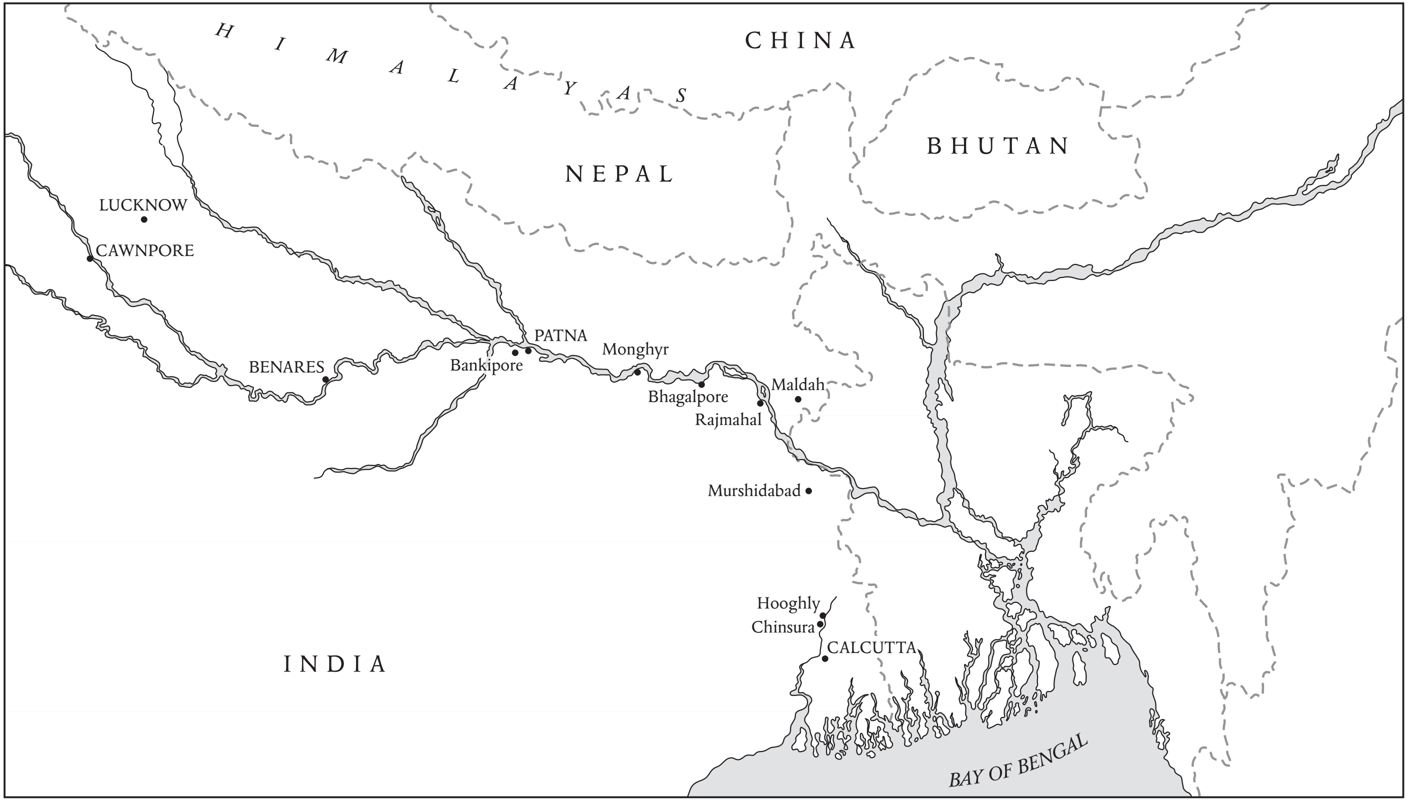
The self-confident opulence of the European residents of Calcutta masked undercurrents of uncertainty, stemming from the broader political situation and from internal feuds. Anglo-Indians were as shocked as any British readers to hear of the loss of the prize possession in the Old Empire; it brought home to them how quickly and violently things could change. Significant military actions were taking place to the west, in the First Anglo-Maratha War (1775–82), and to the south, in the Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780–4). In 1778, news of the declaration of war with France led to massive preparation for a possible invasion of Calcutta. Against this background, it is not surprising to discover that the more 'patriotic' songs of Purcell and Handel were especially popular in the Anglo-Indian circles. Performance of such pieces rallied spirits as much as they reflected growing imperial aspirations. Internally, the development of the East India Company's political role in India became an increasing preoccupation of its servants. Party strife was very much in evidence during the 1770s. The Regulating Act of India in 1773 instituted a 'supreme council' with five members. As governor-general, Warren Hastings found himself confronted by a 'hostile' majority, led by Philip Francis. The effects of this were felt in the musical world, as Calcutta divided into sharply opposed factions.

During this period, the inhabitants of Calcutta would have become aware of the increasing importance of Oudh in the Company's affairs. As Mughal authority

declined, so the Nawabs of Oudh gained both in political and cultural prestige. The Company viewed Oudh as a buffer state, which could offer protection to Bengal from hostile forces such as the Marathas. Under Seruja ud Daulah and Asuf ud Daulah, English influence increased steadily. The main route between Oudh and Calcutta was the Ganges river-system, and the journey up the river became very much part of the Indian experience. Using a budgerow, the voyage was a leisurely affair, with numerous stopping places to visit the small English communities which had grown up in clusters of pleasantly situated country houses. Music was very much part of the journey, and much thought was given to the provision of harpsichords and other instruments. The early morning tranquillity of the Ganges was as likely to be disturbed by horn duets from the professional musicians employed to accompany European progressions up-river, or by informal glee singing, as by the distant sounds of Indian naubat ensembles. This chain of settlements, running inland north-west up the Gangetic plains through the modern states of West Bengal, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh to the eighteenth-century kingdom of Oudh (see map), merely added to what was a characteristic feature of music-making in India: its organizational difficulty. The long distances involved, the frequency of arrivals and departures, and the endemic practical problems of keeping keyboard instruments in good order challenged the formidable skills of even professional Anglo-Indian administrators. When a brother and sister living apart in Benares and Calcutta wished to prepare some Corelli trio sonatas for their next meeting, the entire resources of the East India Company transport system, army camp baskets, river baggage boats, hircurras, and pulwars seemed to be needed to ensure the right parts and instruments were in the right places at the right times. Even when everything was in place, there was still the never-ending struggle to keep instruments in tune.

The character of musical life in the Anglo-Indian community was transformed by the arrival of larger numbers of women from Europe. Although still a relatively small proportion of the population—one estimate was that there were sixteen men to one woman—they influenced significantly the development of the musical life of the city.[14] In their views on musical aesthetics, their choice of repertoire, and their conduct of musical performance, the newly arrived women of the Anglo-Indian community often found themselves at odds with the hitherto dominant 'male' musical culture, most overtly represented by the Catch Club, with its bar on women and its promotion of the 'ancient' string repertoire. One of the most fascinating aspects of the Fowke correspondence is the account it gives of the clash of these values. There were social reasons why such divisions were even more apparent in India than in England. With its reputation for wealth and its notoriously one-sided population, the city was beginning to attract single women in search of a good husband. Musical accomplishment and eligibility were indissolubly linked in this marriage market. On the voyage out, unmarried women, often in very trying circumstances, would undertake exhausting regimens of practice to prepare themselves, and once they had

[14] T. Williamson, *The East India Vade Mecum*, 2 vols. (London, 1810), 56.



English Settlements on the Ganges River Systems in the Late Eighteenth Century

settled in India, there was a strong incentive to establish the culture of the domestic musical soirée. Such evenings were organized specifically to attract the favoured 'beaux'; married women, including keen musicians, would refrain from singing so as not to detract from the impression made by the unmarried hostess; and even the programme order, quite unlike that of public concerts, would facilitate growing intimacy as the hours passed by, with mixed glee singing scheduled for the coolness of the veranda in the late evenings.

The residents of Calcutta were fundamentally European in their tastes, yet the trappings (if not the essence) of the Indian experience were everywhere to see. The climate with its intense heat and its monsoons was a constant topic of conversation. A pattern of daily living evolved to take account of the extreme heat of the afternoons. Socializing took place in the late evening. Keen women musicians would practise in the morning, rest in the afternoon, and make music with male acquaintances in the evening. Some Indian customs such as the hookah were widely adopted, but despite this acceptance of certain aspects of the Indian way of life, the sudden fashion for arrangements of Indian music in the 1780s seems surprising, given the long history of previous indifference. For Europeans throughout the centuries, music has always been the most incomprehensible Indian art.[15] In the early seventeenth century, the sheer novelty of the experience seized the imagination, and interesting descriptions were written by such as the much-travelled Cornish sea captain Peter Mundy.[16] As time passed, the prevailing view came to stress the 'savage' and 'barbarous' nature of Indian music. In the longer term, this attitude came to predominate to a very marked extent, but there was a period in the second half of the eighteenth century when a more enlightened approach was fashionable. Amongst men this more positive reaction to Indian culture found expression in academic study. Important discoveries were made in the field of Indian philology by the pioneering linguist Sir William Jones and the classic works of early Indian literature and mythology were translated. The most lasting legacy from this period was the Asiatic Society of Calcutta. Music was not a central field of its enquiry, but, making good use of his linguistic expertise, Jones worked on Indian modes, while others investigated Indian instruments.[17] Women, by convention, expressed their interest through fashion rather than science. The picturesque movement, a characteristic feature of which was a consuming curiosity about the customs, costumes, trades, and arts of different 'nations', found fertile ground in India. For a small number of Englishwomen, Indian music became a highly fashionable pursuit. Zoffany's portraits of Indian singers were much sought after, and exquisite sets of miniatures of local instrumentalists were commissioned from Indian artists, of which Sophia Plowden's collection in the Fitzwilliam Museum is a superb example.[18] Attempts were soon under way to transcribe Indian songs into conventional European notation. These

[15] G. Farrell, *Indian Music and the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 8–10.

[16] Woodfield, *English Musicians*, 276.

[17] F. Fowke, 'On the Vina or Indian Lyre', *Asiatick Researches*, 1 (1788), 295–9; W. Jones, 'On the Musical Modes of the Hindus', *Asiatic Researches*, 3 (1799), 55–87.

[18] Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 380.

pieces became known as 'Hindostannie' airs, and their manufacture necessitated co-operation between Indian linguists and musicians and Europeans. The resulting airs could hardly be said to bear much resemblance to their Indian originals, yet the use of drones, irregular metres, unusual ornamentation patterns, and occasional attempts at mode demonstrates that the intention at least was to produce authentic versions. Most of the transcriptions were made in the kingdom of Oudh. In the raffish atmosphere of this court, celebrated for its cock-fighting, tiger-hunting, and abundance of nautch dancers, contacts between Indians and Englishmen were closer than elsewhere, and Indian singers and musicians were invited into English homes so that transcriptions could be made. One woman singer from Kashmir, known as Khanum to the English, achieved the status of a celebrity—as a nautch dancer to army officers, and as a source of Indian tunes to women collectors. Back in Calcutta, 'Hindostannie' airs were as fashionable in domestic soirées as Scottish songs were in London. Authenticity in performance was taken very seriously, with amateur singers dressing up in Indian costume. All these efforts were warmly approved by Warren Hastings, who was himself presented with a book of airs, the authenticity of which he felt moved to commend.[19]

The growing vitality of Anglo-Indian musical life in the 1780s is reflected in the attempt to establish an urban musical culture modelled on that of a typical provincial town in England. Concerts and other musical events took place in the 'Harmonic' tavern, the theatre, the church, and buildings such as the Old Court House, which were part of the rapidly growing civic infrastructure of the city.[20] This decade saw persistent attempts to organize regular subscription series, increasing numbers of individual benefit concerts, and even large-scale oratorio performances. Yet the evidence suggests that although the population of the city was on the verge of being sufficiently large and wealthy to sustain such ventures, other factors, such as the heat and organizational problems, conspired to limit their appeal. The 1790s thus appears to represent something of a retrenchment in the programme of public musical events, Calcutta, through different causes, resembling London in this respect. The great oratorio performances of 1797 were adjudged to have been a success, but they illustrated so well the difficulties of staging such events in India that they were not repeated on the same scale.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the return home was an integral part of the Anglo-Indian experience. Most employees of the Company went out with the intention of making sufficient money to live in comfort after their return to England. It was by no means unusual, as Warren Hastings did, to make a second trip to India to replace a lost fortune. Few as yet thought the possibility of remaining in India an option worthy of consideration. As Lady Chambers wrote to Lady Clive: 'Miss Fowke and her brother leave us in the ship which takes this. They have money enough to make every place agreeable, tho' poor India is seldom preferr'd, when it

[19] I. Woodfield, 'The "Hindostannie Air": English Attempts to Understand Indian Music in the Late Eighteenth Century', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 119 (1994), 189–211.

[20] J. P. Losty, *Calcutta: City of Palaces* (London: British Library, 1990).

has gratified all our wishes.'[21] Yet many left with real regret. A letter from Margaret Fowke to Lady Clive expresses a genuine love for the country:

Monghire, 8 February 1786 Margaret Fowke to Margaret Clive

> Your Ladyship will easily imagine with how much delight we both look forward to the happiness of seeing our friends and to all the pleasures of England after such a long absence. I have already enjoyed this happy prospect a thousand times, and yet I do not take leave of India without strong emotions. I do not allude to Calcutta, for tho' I spent my time there very agreeably, the society is too dissipated to interest the least—and I have besides left it a considerable time. Both the climate and the face of the country at Benares are far superior to any part of Bengal, and the whole time I was there we enjoyed an agreeable & happy society in one of the most charming situations in India . . .
>
> I apprehend that your ladyship's travels in this country have never extended so high as Monghire, the place from which I am now writing to you . . . it is one of the sweetest spots imaginable. England in many parts is not half so beautiful.[22]

Although many expatriates longed for England, the return there was by no means always a comfortable experience. A turning-point in English attitudes to Anglo-Indians came in the 1760s. The huge fortunes acquired by Clive and others caused a public outcry. It was widely assumed that infamous atrocities had been committed by these rapacious seekers of fortunes, and the 'nabob' became a figure of real hate. Hand-in-hand with humanitarian concern went envy; as *nouveaux riches*, nabobs were doubly suspect in class-dominated English society.[23] The letters of Margaret Clive around this time show an awareness of the growing isolation of the Anglo-Indian community, which also had to contend with widespread ignorance about India. Men upon whose lives India had left an indelible mark were sometimes taken aback to discover how little was known. An Anglo-Indian attending a masquerade in the 1780s noted with amazement that not a single person present could identify a 'Hindostannie' dress worn by one of the women.[24] By the mid-1780s the worst period of public opprobrium was over; larger numbers of men and women were now returning from India with rewards more in proportion to their efforts. The Anglo-Indian community appeared increasingly as an opulent, self-confident group with a distinctive niche in English society, membership of which was determined by the shared experience of India.

The attitude to English culture adopted by the community of returned Anglo-Indians makes a fascinating study. For as long as they remained in India, Englishmen tried to persuade themselves that the standards of Calcutta's musical life were a fair reflection of the distant metropolitan original. But it was hard for discerning amateur musicians to ignore the reality. William Aldersey, writing to thank Lady Clive for some music, lamented: 'I cannot expect to taste that Entertainment [music] in

21 NLW, Aberystwyth, Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 30; 5 Mar. 1786.

22 Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 30.

23 J. Holzman, *Nabobs in England: A Study of the Returned Anglo-Indian, 1760–1785* (New York, 1926), 15–36.

24 BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/26; Francis Fowke to Margaret Fowke, 14 Feb. 1790.

perfection untill I return to Europe, an Event much wish'd for, but of great uncertainty.'[25] In the mean time, it was possible to dream. Finding some pleasure in the out-of-tune rendition of some Italian songs, Lady Clive's cousin mused: 'What a Happiness have I to come—that of seeing an Opera!'[26] Once back in the home country, Anglo-Indians realized that, although their musical experiences in India might be deemed exotic and inherently interesting, they lacked one crucial ingredient—contact with Italian style. To remedy this glaring cultural deficit, Anglo-Indians spent time and money: they took the Grand Tour; they patronized Italian opera at the King's Theatre; and they employed the most elegantly cultured Italian music teachers for their children. With this Italian 'gloss' on what might, for all its other merits, easily be regarded as an unsophisticated musical background, Anglo-Indians could participate with confidence in English musical life.

The amateur musicians upon whose lives this study is based were part of an extended network of relations, friends, and colleagues, and they thus exemplify a significant feature of late eighteenth-century Anglo-Indian society: its clannishness. What follows is a brief account of the main individuals. No attempt is made to give complete biographies, but to assist the reader, concise indications will be given of the main areas of musical relevance.

The private correspondence of Robert and Margaret Clive contains material relating to their shared musical interests. Like most young ladies who travelled to India, Margaret relied a good deal on music to fill her time, and she evidently devoted much effort to practising and playing with friends. Her correspondents, nearly all men, included her brother Edmund Maskelyne, her cousin Thomas Kelsall, John Carnac, an associate of her husband's who rose to the rank of general, and Henry Strachey who became Clive's secretary in 1764. Music is occasionally mentioned, and the comments are sometimes revealing of male attitudes towards music. Her own musical interests come into clearer focus after her return to England in 1760. Her lessons with John Stanley, himself connected by marriage to the Anglo-Indian community, her respect for the 'ancient' repertoire of Handel and Corelli, and her continuing musical progress are the main themes. In 1764, Clive made his last journey to India, following his appointment as Governor of Bengal. Margaret, who was prevented only by pregnancy from travelling to India with him, helped to recruit four musicians for the journey. Their desertion at Rio de Janeiro was the subject of numerous letters. In Clive's absence, important East India Company elections were held in London, and Margaret undertook some canvassing in which music played a part. Of particular note is a musical soirée which she organized on 13 March 1765, at which the opera star Manzuoli and the young Mozart children were scheduled to perform.[27] After Clive's return in 1767, there is less about private music-making in their correspondence. Late in 1773 he went abroad, and some of his last letters to his

[25] Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 35; 14 Sept. 1768.

[26] Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 37; Thomas Kelsall to Margaret Clive, 24 Oct. 1764.

[27] I. Woodfield, 'New Light on the Mozarts' London Visit: A Private Concert with Manzuoli', *Music & Letters*, 76 (1995), 187–208.

wife concern his views on the Italian operas which he saw. After her husband's death, Margaret Clive's musical interests came increasingly to centre upon the progress of her own children and that of her nieces, the Maskelyne daughters of her brother Nevil, the Astronomer Royal. The social and fashionable aspects of music seem increasingly to dominate her thoughts.

By far the most important Anglo-Indian correspondence relating to music is that of the Fowke family.[28] John Walsh, Clive's secretary in 1757 and an MP from 1761, provides the link between the two families, as his sister Elizabeth married Joseph Fowke. Many hundreds of letters written by Joseph and his two children Francis and Margaret survive from the mid-1770s through to the period of the Napoleonic Wars. Joseph had first been employed by the East India Company in Madras. Having gambled away his fortune, he was obliged in mid-life to return to India as a free merchant. He became involved in the disputes of the 1770s, siding with the majority opposing Hastings, and at one point he was even prosecuted for conspiracy. In private life he was of quarrelsome disposition, an awkward, combative character, who tried the patience of family and friends alike. He could be charming—one acquaintance described him at a social gathering as 'gay and flurting like a young man', yet Hastings considered him of 'a violent & morose temper, and while under that influence, too apt to insinuate actions in which he was concerned, to base & bad motives in others'. More typically, however, he inspired aversion or even pity. Joseph returned to England, but his ruinous appetite for gambling made it difficult for his family to help him. His musical interests lay in the 'ancient' repertoire of Corelli and Handel of which he was a partisan champion. He took a solicitous view of the musical progress of his children and cast a jaundiced eye over the prospects for professional musicians in Calcutta.

Francis Fowke followed his father into an Indian career, and was similarly caught up in the Hastings controversies, being appointed Resident at Benares no fewer than three times. Not until 1783 was he finally established in the position. Glee singing, sporadic violin practice, and his sister's musical progress occupied him during his leisure hours. Under the influence of Sir William Jones, he developed an interest in Indian instruments, and his description of the *vina* was published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal.[29] He returned to London, comfortably off, having made money from diamonds and opium, but with only a modest record of service in the upper echelons of the Company hierarchy. Back in England, he built up an impressive circle of musical acquaintances, which included the eminent string players Salomon, Cervetto, and Raimondi. Music-making with his friends, who included Robert Morse, Sheriff of Calcutta in 1783, took up much of his time.

Margaret Fowke was born in 1758. Her mother Elizabeth wrote to Lady Clive on 17 October: 'Last July I lay in of a little girl who as she is a Rarity is a violent

[28] On the biographies of the Fowkes see G. R. Kaye and E. H. Johnston, *India Office Library: Catalogue of Manuscripts in European Languages*, vol. ii, part 2: *Minor Collections and Miscellaneous Manuscripts* (London, 1937).

[29] Fowke, 'On the Vina or Indian Lyre', 295–9.

favourite notwithstanding she has no great Beauty to recommend her, she is indeed the Plainest of all my Children . . . I have taken the Liberty to nominate you for her Godmother and have called her Peggy.'[30] Elizabeth's death meant that when Joseph returned to India in 1771, Margaret had to be placed under the guardianship of her uncle John Walsh. Two women, Mrs Ledien and Mrs Kitchen, took responsibility for her early education, the latter giving her first lessons in music. Margaret periodically wrote to inform them of her musical progress. She herself went out to India in 1776, where at first she was caught up in the hostility of the strife of this period, reporting that she had been ignored by Hastings. Her letters from the period up until 1783 illustrate chiefly the growth of society concerts in Calcutta and the fashion for catch singing. There are infrequent glimpses of the leading performers, Lady Clavering (wife of Sir John Clavering) and her daughters, Lady Hyde (wife of the Supreme Court Judge, John Hyde), a Mrs Tolly (presumably the wife of Colonel William Tolly), and the family of the President of the Board of Trade, William Aldersey.

Until her early twenties, Margaret lived quietly with her father in Calcutta with a small circle of friends. A long series of letters from 1783 shows that her circle of musical acquaintances was expanding rapidly. Many well-known East India Company figures attended her concert parties: Sir John and Lady Day; Edward Wheler and John Shore, subsequently appointed as Council members under Cornwallis; Jack Auriol; Edward Hay and his wife; and army captains, such as Collins and Kirkpatrick. Uncomfortably aware of her age and her unmarried state, she began to practise singing and keyboard-playing with great intensity, and devoted much of what energy remained to the organization of musical soirées. Three leading members of the Calcutta Catch Club, Messink, Playdell, and Golding, were regular guests at her musical evenings. After a period of increasing friction with her father, she finally gained his permission to travel up the Ganges to be with her brother at Benares. She made the journey in the company of Sir Robert Chambers, one of the Calcutta Supreme Court judges, and his wife, Lady Frances. In Benares, Margaret took up the currently fashionable pursuit of collecting 'Hindostannie' airs, on which subject she corresponded with Sophia Powden, who shared her interest. For linguistic assistance with the texts, Margaret turned to Sir William Jones, orientalist and newly appointed judge in the Calcutta Supreme Court. By now, any remaining animosity to the Fowkes on the part of Warren Hastings had been put aside. When the governor-general met Margaret again during his visit to Benares, he was presented with a copy of her collection of airs. An exchange of letters between the two on the subject of Indian musical arrangements is warm in tone. Though not physically attractive, Margaret's liveliness of mind, musical accomplishments, and strength of purpose won her several male admirers and offers of marriage. She eventually chose John Benn. A letter from Lady Chambers to Lady Clive is coy about whether the proposal had been made before the two left India, or whether it was to

[30] BL, OIOC, Clive MS G37/box 25.

be left to the sea air and the long voyage home to cast their traditional spell: 'She [Margaret] has refused some good offers. Mr Benn who is of the party home has a large fortune, appears a sincere admirer and is a worthy good man.'[31]

Margaret's marriage was followed by a European tour, during which she practised the piano at every opportunity. She met *en route* a number of Anglo-Indian acquaintances from the Barwell and Wheler families. In France she suffered the first of several miscarriages which were to blight her life for a period. Margaret and her husband eventually inherited the title and estate of her uncle John Walsh at Warfield. By the beginning of the new century, both she and Francis had young families, and the musical education of the new generation of Fowkes now came under discussion. Fashionable teachers such as Francesco Bianchi, Ferdinando Mazzante, and Thomas Greatorex were employed and the progress of the young ones in keyboard-playing and singing was monitored closely. The Napoleonic Wars cast a dark shadow over the last phase of their correspondence. Margaret and Francis both regularly expressed fears over the outcome of the struggle, and more particularly over the military prospects and safety of their children and younger relatives.

Throughout their lives, the Fowkes, father, son, and daughter, wrote with passion about music. They wrote too with a degree of knowledge and insight. But most important of all, they described how they *felt* about music; it is this aspect of their correspondence that is of especial value. The central focus of this study will be the Fowke correspondence, but reference will also be made from time to time to the letter-journals of Susan Burney, who possessed a similar range of qualities to those of Margaret Fowke: a passion for music; self-awareness; some literary ability; and a keen eye for detail. Her descriptions of amateur music-making are comparable to those of her Anglo-Indian contemporary, and they will enable some useful comparisons to be made.

[31] Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 30; 5 Mar. 1786.

1

Supplying the Market

The Export Trade in Instruments

By the 1780s, supplying Anglo-Indians with music and instruments had become a lucrative business. London publishers and manufacturers recognized the growing value of this market, and special deals for retailers in India were not uncommon. It was easy enough to arrange for the export of small instruments, such as the flute and violin, but keyboard instruments, because of their size and delicacy, posed particular problems. Harpsichords and pianos could be smashed during storms at sea, ruined by the sea air, or damaged during disembarkation. The next stage in the journey was just as hazardous, often involving a voyage up the Ganges. If an instrument survived all this, the Indian climate could still wreck it overnight, as the intense heat and humidity began to affect the soundboard. Armies of termites, which dispatched most of the organs installed in Indian churches, could only rarely have had the chance to get to work on a harpsichord or pianoforte in pristine condition. Yet, although keyboard instruments were frequently advertised as possessing features suiting them to the climate of India, most of the causes of failure were beyond the control of the manufacturer, and firms could thus sell in this market without fear of reproach.

To travel to Calcutta with a functioning keyboard instrument complete with packing case, music drawers, music and replacement wire required no small amount of organization, but some travellers to India opted to take on the challenge of purchasing an instrument in London, rather than wait until their arrival in Calcutta. The main reason for wishing to travel with a keyboard instrument was to facilitate practice. For women sailing to India in search of a husband, regular access to an instrument during the voyage was a matter of real concern. Without it, it might be impossible to maintain a useful level of accomplishment. In the cramped conditions on board, only very small instruments could have been placed in individual cabins; larger harpsichords in active use at sea would have to go in public spaces. Thus, while the gentleman amateur could scratch away on his fiddle in the privacy of his own cabin, women, in an inversion of the usual order, had to practise in public. The

efforts of a woman of modest talent, devoted nonetheless to her daily hours of practice, could cause serious friction. Anticipating that she would travel to India with her husband in 1764, Margaret Clive looked forward to the companionship of a fellow traveller, a Mrs Sumner.[1] In the event, her pregnancy obliged her to remain in England, while Robert Clive was left to endure this woman's practice regime. He was driven to apoplectic rage, made all the more intolerable because etiquette forbade any interference:

Rio Janeiro, 11 October 1764 Robert Clive to Margaret Clive

> To add still to our misfortunes we found in Mrs Sumner a Woman of a most Diabolical Disposition; ignorant, ill tempered, and selfish to the highest Degree. She seem'd possess'd of every disagreeable Quality which ever belong'd to the Female Sex without being Mistress of one Virtue (chastity excepted) to throw into the opposite Scale. It is with the utmost Difficulty we can behave with common Civility towards her . . . To give you a specimen of this Lady's Natural abilities, she gave us to understand that she understood Music and could play upon the Harpsichord and to convince us of this she has been playing two hum drum Tunes for four Hours every day since she has been on Board (Sunday excepted) without the least Variation or Improvement, notwithstanding the assistance of Groenimeng who is happy for him to have two Guineas a Month instead of two Guineas a Song for teaching her. I am apprehensive you will think me too severe and Satyrical.[2]

Margaret, seemingly sensing that her own 'musical' behaviour on the return voyage from India had not been above reproach, sought to deflect Clive's wrath:

Berkeley Square, 12 March 1765 Margaret Clive to Robert Clive

> Your letter proves plainly that everything is agreeable in those we love, and everything hateful from those we do not love—else could you have borne the thorough Bass etc. you used to hear from a friend of yours? and if I had gone on the voyage do not you think I should [have] given you harpsichord playing enough?[3]

And it seems that another male passenger on her voyage might have had some cause to complain:

Berkeley Square, 8 May 1766 Margaret Clive to John Carnac

> I have just received a letter in french from Padre Bento our ship-mate. You remember his occupation on board the Royal George, tuning my harpsichord. Poor man![4]

At least Margaret was so timid about her playing as to be discreet. She confided to Carnac: 'I was forced to try to amuse myself as well as I could. What signifyed playing on the Harpsichord when nobody heard me?'[5] As for Mrs Sumner, her harpsichord practice can hardly have helped her husband's prospects. Clive doubtless had

[1] BL, OIOC, Strachey MS F128/27; Margaret Clive to John Carnac: 'A Band of Music and a Music Master, will employ me on this Voyage, and Mrs Sumner will be a very agreeable Companion, I imagine from what I have seen of her.'

[2] BL, OIOC, Clive MS G37/box 15/1.

[3] NLW, Aberystwyth, Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 35.

[4] Strachey MS F128/27.

[5] BL, OIOC, MS B383; 15 Mar. 1761.

the sound of her 'tune' ringing in his memory's ear, when, after arriving in India, he confronted William Sumner with accepting bribes, and forced him to resign rather than face disclosure.[6]

For those who opted to arrange transportation of instruments to India themselves, advice was available. After at least half a century of experience, many of the pitfalls were well known. Captain Williamson addressed himself to the traveller with a keyboard instrument in his *East India Vade Mecum*.[7] Even in the case of instruments made especially for the overseas market, his view was that it was necessary to take radical precautions before taking them on board:

> Those ladies who are partial to music should be particularly careful that the piano-fortes they may take with them, be constructed in such a manner as may exempt them from those wondrous effects produced by the climate of India. I have had the pleasure of aiding several friends in this instance, and found that the instruments made for exportation could never be depended upon, unless clamped at every joint with plates of brass, and secured, in the more delicate parts, by means of battens well screwed and cemented to the sound board. Experience has satisfied me, that the pianos most appropriate for hot climates are made by Clementi, Kirkman, and Tomkinson, at their respective manufacturies in London.

A draconian solution might have been to immure all pianos in the hold, clamped, screwed down, cemented, and otherwise entombed securely in their cases, but this would not have done for instruments required during the voyage:

> Ladies will derive considerable convenience and gratification from having an exterior case made to enclose the piano-forte, leaving a space of about an inch all round. This outward safeguard should be of planed deal, stained of a mahogany color, or painted; and it should open in front, so as to admit of playing the instrument, while its lid should be fixed upon hinges, that it may be thrown back at pleasure. The lower part of the frame may be packed, and laid by; a spare frame of deal being substituted during the voyage, with a set of shelves below to contain music, books, etc all locked up by means of folding doors. Both the exterior case, and the frame, ought to be furnished with lacquered iron handles, whereby to lift them occasionally; but particularly intended to secure them to the side of the ship, and to the deck; without such a precaution the whole would be tumbled about and shivered to atoms, by the vessel's motion.

This kind of case would allow easy access to the instrument on board, while affording some protection in really rough weather. A respectable piece of furniture of this kind did not come cheap. Longman & Broderip provided one for Edward Clive in 1798:[8]

A new patent Piano forte	31	10	0
A packing case	0	14	0
Tuning and Regulating a Grand Piano	0	7	6
A deal Chest of Drawer with Locks and handles and lifting handles with Case for Piano and other Instruments	6	12	1
a smooth case for piano frame	0	14	6

6 P. J. Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 169.

7 Thomas Williamson, *East India Vade Mecum* (London, 1810), 48.

8 BL, OIOC, Powys MS, Neg 4383.

While it was generally recognized that the essential problem with pianos in India lay with the soundboard, preventative measures, such as attaching supports, could adversely affect an instrument's tone. Williamson recognized this dilemma; all he could suggest was vigilance and the use of heavy blankets:

> With respect to what is called 'preparing an instrument for the climate', much may certainly be done, by taking care that only the best seasoned wood is employed, and by clamping the case with metal, both within and without; but all this has little connection with the belly, or sounding-board; which cannot be much strengthened without considerably deteriorating the tone, and causing a piano to be in the first instance condemned, for want of that richness which cannot be given to one whose vibrations are obstructed. The only chance is, to keep a piano well covered with blankets during the heats, as also in very damp weather, and to uncloathe it gradually, when about to be opened for performance. By such precautions, the instrument may remain tolerably in tune, and not sustain much injury from the variations of seasons; after two or three years, the danger may be less; but it will be prudent never to relax in point of prevention, lest the instrument should suddenly fail.

Players of all instruments were strongly recommended to travel with an abundance of spare strings and reeds, as these were very scarce in India:

> Gentlemen who perform on string instruments, should be careful to provide an ample supply of strings, firsts and fourths especially; they being not only very dear, and perhaps damaged, when procurable, but at times not procurable in any part of India, for love nor money! Reeds for oboes, clarionets, bassoons, etc. are similarly circumstanced. Nor would it be superfluous for a lady to take with her several sets of wires for her piano; they being very scarce.

In the view of the Fowke family, locally purchased strings were highly suspect, and so they ordered a consignment of replacement strings every year directly from London. In the autumn of 1784, a much-needed box of strings was landed from the *Dutton*, but it did not contain enough. Joseph reprimanded his son for lack of foresight: 'for the future take care to write for a sufficient quantity, that Peggy's harpsichord may not be reduced to silence.'[9]

In his final summary, Williamson depicts the piano market in India, as one very favourable to the sale of the product, but one which was virtually devoid of any after-sales service:

> The climate is unfavourable to instruments of every kind, especially to pianos, and offers a most formidable bar to the indulgence of a musical ear. No persons can be more liberal in their purchases of instruments, or of select music, than the ladies of India; they often giving two hundred pounds for a good grand piano; but the incessant apprehension of warps, and cracks, is a tremendous drawback on the interest they feel in the possession of even the best of its kind. Repairs, of every sort, whether of violins, pianos, flutes etc are exorbitantly dear, and, even at Calcutta, not always practicable; either owing to dissipation, the want of some essential article, or the quantity of work in hand. Nor is it easy to obtain the temporary accommodation of an instrument while one is repairing, unless at such a rate as utterly pre-

[9] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E6B, 80; 19 Oct. 1784.

cludes all of moderate income from availing themselves of such an opportunity, when it may chance to offer.

Ownership was a lottery, and replacement rather than repair was often the only possible response.

The difficulties attendant upon organizing the transport of a harpsichord or pianoforte were such that most Anglo-Indian amateurs opted to purchase an instrument in India. There were two possibilities. It was certainly open to anyone to order an instrument directly from London, and then pay for its shipment to Calcutta. Margaret Clive received a request for assistance from a friend, who wished to do just this:

Calcutta, 30 January 1766 Frances Watts to Margaret Clive

> The very particular attachment I have to Musick is well known to your Ladyship, and as I am distress'd beyond measure to get a Harpsichord from England, owing to the difficulties of having it brought out, I hope I may be excused in the liberty I take in wishing to avail myself of your Interest in that particular; I have so far presumed in this matter, as to enclose such a memorandum as may be necessary to send to the maker, and if I am so fortunate as to have your Friendship in getting a passage for it, I would beg of you to lay your commands on Mr Kyrkman as soon as this letter shall come to your Ladyship's hands, in which you will highly oblige.
>
> P.S. I would beg the Favour of you to overlook Kirkmans Bill and order it to be sent to Mr Culling Smith who I have wrote to pay it, let it amount to what it may, so as it meets with your Ladyships approbation first.[10]

Perhaps this lady was the widow of William Watts, who died in 1764 with a large fortune.[11] Culling Smith was a council member, who had retired in 1762, supposedly after the receipt of 134,000 rupees as a gift.[12] Lady Clive made the necessary arrangements:

London, 12 November 1766 Margaret Clive to Robert Clive

> Mrs Watts wrote to me for a harpsichord and everything necessary for the keeping it in order for at least three years. I ordered Kirckman to set about making one; he has just completed it and it is put on board the Lord Holland . . . Captain Nairne . . . has politely taken the charge of the harpsichord without giving me the trouble of applying to India House.[13]

A less troublesome option, but one that left buyers at the mercy of Calcutta retailers, was to purchase an instrument in India. By the 1780s, the Calcutta piano trade was founded on well-established lines of supply. London piano makers would sell, sometimes at a discount for bulk purchases, to officers of East India Company ships, ranging from captains, first and second officers, pursers, down to lesser figures such as third and fourth officers, and even surgeons, who had purchased an 'investment' in a Company voyage. Each officer had an allowance of space on his ship, and his 'investment' would be stored during the voyage. Although London keyboard

[10] Clive MS G37/box 38. [11] Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes*, 235.
[12] Ibid. 169, 236. [13] Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 37.

retailers could doubtless have purchased space directly, it seems to have been the universal practice to allow East India Company officers to act as middle-men in this way. The advantage from the point of view of the manufacturer was obvious: once sold, the company would have no further responsibility for the condition of its instruments. Upon arrival in Calcutta, a few days would elapse before the cargo was landed to allow the paper work to be completed. Rumours of the contents of the latest ship to dock would circulate fast. Officers would notify by post those for whom they had specific commissions, and then an extraordinary scramble would take place, as they sought to off-load their investments. Sales could take place at bazaars, established auction houses, commission warehouses, public buildings hired for the occasion, or in private homes. In the frenzy of selling that occurred after the arrival of a ship, consignments of instruments might change hands several times, before reaching the amateur players of India. A wide range of selling techniques was deployed: raffle; lottery; auction; auction without reserve prices; private treaty. Multiple transactions steadily diminished any one seller's level of responsibility for the condition of instruments. Nonetheless, for artefacts such as pianos and harpsichords, a quick sale was absolutely essential, because of the speed with which the product could become unsaleable. In the Calcutta keyboard market, the advice *caveat emptor* was well taken.

During the 1780s, a few attempts were made to set up specialist outlets for music and instruments, hitherto sold as part of the general trade. The arrival of an employee of the leading publisher Longman & Broderip to set up his own business in Calcutta is a clear sign that the strength of the Indian market was being recognized in London. Most of these specialist concerns failed to flourish, and a common tendency was for music suppliers to revert quite quickly to commercial activity in a range of other fields as well. Even Stone, the leading music retailer in Calcutta in the mid-1780s, had at times to resort to other commercial interests.

To form some indication of the character of this market, it will be useful to look at musical instruments sold through the Calcutta newspapers. The advertisements usually identify the ship, the ranks of the officers with investments to sell, the names of the firms undertaking the sale, and the categories of goods for sale (Table 1). This was a period of dynamic growth in the Calcutta market for music and instruments. There was a growing perception that the provision of musical supplies to the expanding and affluent European population of India represented a first-class business opportunity, and there was no shortage of entrepreneurs willing to take on the challenge. It is hard to be certain how many instruments were imported overall. The newspapers ran advertisements for large consignments of musical supplies from an average of six to eight ships a year, sometimes more. The number of keyboard instruments per ship can hardly have been less than five or six, which gives a range of about forty to sixty instruments entering Calcutta every year. (As yet there were relatively few grand pianos, which would have taken up much more space.) This may well be an underestimate, as it includes neither instruments in the possession of new arrivals, nor those purchased in London by post from Calcutta, nor smaller stocks on



Plate 1. Johann Zoffany, *The Morse and Cator Families*, *c.*1784

other ships, not identified in the press. As we shall see, violins and flutes, the quintessential instruments of the Anglo-Indian army, poured into Calcutta in very large numbers. Advertisements were evidently drawn up in haste, often with scant regard to the accuracy of spelling. In general, the approach adopted in selling new instruments differs little from what might be encountered in London, with novelty and fashionability as the key marketing concepts. There was intense interest in combination instruments, even in one case, in a combined commode/pianoforte. There are relatively few indications of the Indian context in advertisements for new instruments, apart from occasional references to spare harpsichord bellies for sale; much more attention was paid to local considerations in the second-hand market.

Table 1. Music and musical instruments imported on ships in 1786

Ship	Officer	Auctioneer	Instruments
Phoenix	Purser 2nd Mate	Joys	Northumberland bagpipes, Spare reeds
Juliana Maria		Stone & Savory	Musical Instruments, Music
		Mann (recently of Longman & Broderip)	A great quantity of instruments: Harpsichords, Piano Fortes, Organs, both finger and barrel, New Music
Ganges	Captain	Williams & Co.	Piano Fortes complete, Instruction books, Songs, New Lessons, New Music
	3rd Officer 4th Officer	Creighton	Music: New publications, etc.
Earl of Oxford	Captain	Moore, Sanders & Lacey	Musical Instruments: A very curious Organis'd Piano Forte in solid Mahogany case and Dulciana, A new invented Ladies Commode, Solid Mahogany furnished in high stile, and containing a curious Piana Forte to draw out, Piana Forte Guitars, Flutes tipt with silver, with Extra middle Pieces, Quartetto Desks, A Capital Cremona, An assortment of New Music
Walpole	Chief Officer	Wade & Matthews	Music and Musical Instruments by Longman and Broderip: A piano forte, organized, A ditto, with three stops, A ditto with a French frame, A piano forte guitar, A plain ditto, French horns, German flutes,

Table 1. *Continued*

Ship	Officer	Auctioneer	Instruments
			A large collection of New Music
	2nd Officer	Creighton	An elegant large Piano Forte
William Pitt	Captain	Moore, Sanders & Lacey	A Piano Forte and New Music An elegant harpsichord, Piano-fortes, German Flutes, violins, Guittars, Books of Music
Ravensworth	Captain	Moore, Sanders & Lacey	Musical instruments and Musick
Lansdown	Captain	Ord	Musical Instruments and a Collection of New Music:
	Purser		Portable grand piano fortes, with mahogany desks,
	2nd Officer		Elegant organized piano forte, with stop, diapason and dulciana treble, Patent piano forte guittars, A handsome long three stop piano forte, Violin strings, Several books of instructions for the above
	Officer (drowned at sea)	Burrell & Gould	Violins in cases, A quantity of strings, A large assortment of new music
Foulis	Captain	Joys	An elegant organ, with six stops, and two barrels complete
	Captain	Burrell & Gould	Organized harpsichords, Guittars, Pianoforts, Violins, German flutes, Glassados, French and bugle horns, A great variety of new music

Table 2. Second-hand instruments advertised in the Calcutta newspapers, 1787

Owner	Auctioneer	Instruments
Gentleman going to Europe	Williams & Lee	A Piano Forte
	Burrell & Gould	Trumpets and French Horns
	Yeates	A very good Harpsichord
	Williams & Lee	A very good Hand Organ.
	Yeates	A Harpsichord
	Bondfield	New Music
	Duncan	An elegant guitar, and a good Violin
Joseph Fowke [returning to Europe]	Burrell & Gould	A Remarkable fine Toned Harpsichord, Maker Kirkman, A very fine Violincello, and some Violins, one a Stradivaries Handel's songs in 5 vols, with all the accompanyments, in six parts
Gentleman going to Europe	William Williams	A Harpsichord of an excellent construction
An officer of an Indiaman	William Williams	A Hand Organ
	Morgan, Williamson, Davidson & Co.	Music and Musical Instruments
	Pope, Fairlie & Campbell	Large Organ
	Williams, Tullough & Gardner	A few Violin and Violincello Strings
	Williams & Davidson	Two Harpsichords and a spinet
Mr Wright	Bondfield	Hautboys, Clarinets, Bassoons, French Horns

Retailers of new musical instruments in India had to compete with a vigorous second-hand market. Since it was rather pointless to pay for the repatriation of deteriorating harpsichords or pianofortes back to England, amateur musicians often placed them on the market in the weeks prior to embarkation. Many additional instruments came on to the market from the estates of recently deceased Company employees. In the mid-1780s, up to fifteen keyboard instruments a year were advertised (Table 2). Many must have been in a very poor condition, and indeed some advertisements were run for many weeks. Almost certainly the second-hand market was much larger than this. The Fowke correspondence demonstrates the existence of an informal market, with instruments being lent, borrowed, and given away in purely private transactions. Paxton, Cockrell & Delisle, for example, wrote to Francis Fowke on 22 February 1785 to offer him a harpsichord and music from someone who had died during the voyage out:

I have an Harpsichord the property of the Estate of my late Sister who died on her way out to India with some Music—The Harpsichord is I believe a very fine one and the music I dare say valuable. She was an Enthusiast herself—both must be dispos'd of—Do you or Miss Fowke wish to have them?[14]

It is noticeable that whereas new instruments from Europe were advertised with reference to their appearance ('elegant' and 'handsome' being the buzz words), second-hand instruments with an Indian history were advertised as 'in good condition' or as 'fine ton'd'. Everyone knew what a few years in India could do to the tone of instruments, and repeated reassurances upon this point can have fooled few potential buyers. We know from the Fowke correspondence that the harpsichord in their residence suffered an overnight warping of the soundboard so severe that there was no musical sound at all, merely the clatter of the wooden keys. It proved possible with some *ad hoc* carpentry to restore the action, so that at least a single set of strings could sound. This was presumably the instrument which Joseph Fowke put on the market in 1787 with the glowing recommendation: 'A Remarkable fine Toned Harpsichord, Maker Kirkman'.[15]

An invaluable source of evidence concerning the ownership of musical instruments in the Anglo-Indian community is the sequence of volumes in the India Office Library entitled Bengal Inventories. For several decades, at least during the 1760s and 1770s, it was customary to list the belongings of deceased inhabitants of Calcutta in pedantic detail. The significance of these lists extends well beyond the Anglo-Indian community, for they enable some estimate to be made of the extent of musical instrument ownership (and thus of at least rudimentary musical ability) in the male population at large. Doubtless there were reasons, boredom and perhaps an instinctive need to assert identity in a foreign country, why musical interests among men might have been commoner in India than in England, but it is not likely that it would have been on a wholly different scale. The evidence of the Bengal Inventories confirms what seems certain in any case, that a basic level of interest in music was widespread amongst men. It will be useful to list the instruments that occur in the inventories, and to provide a statistical analysis of the frequency with which the major instruments occur in relation to each other. A small selection of lists of musical holdings, arranged by occupation, rank, and gender, exemplifying the spread of instrument ownership, is given in Appendix 1.

A broad estimate of the overall rate of ownership of musical instruments, as represented in these Anglo-Indian inventories, suggests that 10 per cent, plus or minus 2 per cent, was the norm. Although all ranks of the East India Company army owned instruments, there is an overwhelming predominance among middle-ranking officers, such as captains and lieutenants. Such men had the resources to finance their hobby and the privacy and physical space in which to make music. Dean Mahomet reported of the fort at Monghyr: 'The Officers' apartments in the fort were laid out with the greatest elegance; the soldiers', quite compact.'[16] The

[14] Fowke MS D12, 68. [15] *India Gazette*, 16 July 1787.

[16] M. H. Fisher, *The Travels of Dean Mahomet: An Eighteenth-Century Journey through India* (Berkeley, California, and London: University of California Press, 1997), 30.



Plate 2. Johann Zoffany, *Colonel Blair with his Wife and two Daughters and an Ayah in an Interior*, *c.*1786

comparatively frequent ownership of a harpsichord or an organ in these ranks certainly seems to point towards a serious approach to musical activity. Among the lower ranks, sergeants, ensigns, and soldiers, instrument ownership usually consisted of a single flute, which could be kept easily in a knapsack. There was plenty of musical activity among the civilian occupations such as factor and writer, with ownership broadly equating to that of the middle army ranks. Among the musicians, the pattern of possessions reflects not only the need for competence on a range of instruments, but also the value of versatility in a musical career. Ownership of duplicate instruments might reflect a prudent desire to have replacements readily available, while large quantities of strings or spare bows could well have been for the use of pupils. Just as music retailers advertised their services as tuners, copyists, and teachers, so musicians often indulged in small-scale retail to help make ends meet. The professions of performer, teacher, retailer in India are so blurred as to be virtually indistinguishable. It is similarly hard to know whether the quite impressive holdings of instruments and music among some of the inhabitants of Calcutta relate to a hobby, pursued with ardour over many years, or to the purchase of one of the many job lots of instruments and music advertised for sale by private treaty. There are few inventories of goods belonging to unmarried women or widows before the

1780s; the small number that there are include women's instruments, keyboards, and English guitars.

The total number of instruments recorded in the inventories in the two decades between 1760 and 1780 is as follows:

Flute	156	Clarinet	4
Violin	91	Bass viol	3
French Horn	53	Dulcimer	3
Harpsichord	14	Viola	2
Oboe	12	Bassoon	2
Guitar	12	Pianoforte	2
Organ	11	Flageolet	1
Trumpet	5	Musical Glasses	1
Fife	4	Handbells	1
Cello	4	Lute	1

The relative frequency of the most significant chamber music instruments remained fairly static, to judge by five-year totals:

	1765	1770	1775
Flute	45	40	45
Violin	23	32	32
Harpsichord	4	4	6
Organ	3	5	3

There were thus approximately six flutes and three to four violins for every continuo instrument. Pianofortes are few in number before the 1780s, but thereafter rapidly replaced the harpsichord in popularity. All the bass viols occur in the earlier inventories of the 1760s, doubtless a distant reflection of the last phase of that instrument's popularity in London. The lack of cellos during the period as a whole is striking, and it strongly suggests that size was a factor constraining which instruments were brought out to India. An inessential accompanying instrument in the sonata repertoire, the cello was still at this stage dispensable. Newspaper advertisements in the 1780s, however, clearly show that larger numbers of cellos were beginning to enter Calcutta, as the quartet and symphonic repertoires started to achieve popularity. Likewise, violas, of which there are none in the 1760s and only two in the 1770s, would have been needed in larger numbers. A measure of the growth in the affluence of the Anglo-Indian community as a whole is seen in the pattern of ownership of wind instruments. The ubiquitous pairs of horns are found throughout, but there is a very marked increase in the number of oboes in the 1770s, and clarinets are found only in the latter decade. The formation of full wind bands lies behind these changes. The only other popular recreational instrument was the

guitar/English guitar. Ownership of non-Western instruments was minimal; only a 'Bengal fiddle' seems an unambiguous example.

If the 1780s represent the Calcutta music market in a period of vigorous growth, the 1790s represent a consolidation. A number of trends are worth reporting. There was an increasing tendency for advertisements to specify the makers of musical instruments, thereby allowing an assessment to be made of the relative interest of different firms in the India market. This was part of a general process, whereby the value of an instrument came to depend more on its maker's name than on any intrinsic merit. The label 'Stradivarius' would already add value to any violin sold in Calcutta. At the start of the decade, Longman & Broderip were in the ascendant, but younger manufacturers of pianofortes, such as Stodart, were challenging this position of dominance, as shown by the frequency of advertisements in the *Calcutta Gazette*:

22 July 1790	Three new Piano Fortes, by Clements.
26 August 1790	An excellent Harpsichord, made by Longman and Broderip, on purpose for this Country.
24 February 1791	A Capital Organized Harpsichord and Piano Forte made by Longman & Broderip, and cost in London 120 Guineas.
12 May 1791	A New excellent Piano Forte, and A Harpsichord, by Longman & Broderip.
8 March 1792	A Patent Double-keyed Harpsichord, made by Shudi & Broadwood, the property of Lady Chambers. Price 800 Sicca Rupees. [£100]
23 August 1792	A handsome grand Piano Forte by Stodart.
21 February 1793	A fine toned harpsichord, by Kirkman.
	A new Patent Piano Forte, by Broadwood.
	Piano Fortes by Stodart.
28 November 1793	Grand Forte Pianos, from Stoddart & Co.

In the early 1790s, harpsichords were still regularly advertised, perhaps because India was seen as a convenient market for the now nearly redundant instrument, but by the end of the decade, they were rapidly disappearing. The most highly-prized keyboard instruments in India were now undoubtedly grand pianos, which, by the end of the decade, were being advertised regularly in the *Calcutta Gazette*:

14 January 1796	A Grand Piano Forte, with additional keys by Ganer.
5 May 1796	A Patent Piano by Broadwood.
11 August 1796	A Grand PianoForte, with additional keys, from M. & W. Stoddart.
9 March 1797	A Grand Piano Forte, Commissioned from Stoddart, made particularly for this Country, and came out on the Nonsuch; is allowed to be a very fine instrument; and its price S[icca] R[upees] 1200. [£150]
16 March 1797	Piano Fortes, a grand one, with additional Keys, made by Broadwood and Son, with an assortment of newest Music—Price 1,000 S[icca] R[upees]. [£125]
	Two small ditto Patent, with extra Keys, made by Longman & Broderip.



Plate 3. Sir Charles D'Oyly, *The Winter Room in the Artist's House at Patna*, 11 September 1824

	Price each Sicca Rupees 425 [£53. 2*s.* 6*d.*], by the Warren Hastings, unopened, packed in Tin and Copper, and presumed to be in excellent order.
8 June 1797	A Grand Piano Forte, by Stoddart. Price 1,100 Sicca Rupees. [£137. 10*s*]
	Grand Piano Forte by Stoddart and Son, with Additional Keys, in High Order and in Tune, price Sicca Rupees 1500. [£187. 10*s*]
28 September 1797	A remarkably fine toned Grand Piano Forte, with additional keys and pedals, particularly secured to stand the climate of this country, built by Broadwood.

A new method of preserving instruments during the voyage was tried out by Longman & Broderip: wrapping them in tin foil. This was also used by Broadwood.[17]

With the decline of Longman & Broderip, the new leaders in the market were Stodart and Broadwood, whose grand pianos were as prestigious in India as in London. Notwithstanding Captain Williamson's comment that the ladies of India were sometimes willing to pay the fantastic price of £200 for such instruments, the average price of a grand piano seems to have been in the range 1,000 to 1,300 sicca rupees (£125–£160). On one occasion, the sum of £130 was charged for a Broadwood grand to the 'only lady' in Canton. The instrument had been ordered for a man in India, but the ship had been ordered to sail directly to China.[18] Even

[17] D. Wainwright, *Broadwood by Appointment: A History* (London: Quiller Press, 1982), 206.
[18] Ibid. 102.

allowing for insurance, packing, shipping costs, and import duty, these prices represent a very large mark-up over London levels, considering that Broadwood charged £84 for its most expensive grand piano.[19] Yet Anglo-Indian ladies willing to spend such sums were by no means guaranteed to receive a genuine instrument. In 1803, Broadwood, concerned to defend the firm's reputation in India, inserted the following notice in the Indian press:

> John Broadwood & Son, Grand and small piano forte makers to His Majesty and the Princesses having received authentic information that Instruments of very imperfect nature are sent out for sale to India and their name affixed as if manufactured by them think it necessary to acquaint the Gentry in India that none of the numerous Piano Fortes introduced into Asia by officers of Indiamen and others for sale within these 6 years last passed are of their manufacture. They beg to declare that none of the pianofortes that have mahogany fronts or name boards that have any painted ornaments or that have brass clamps on the corners are of their manufacture with the exception of two Grand pianofortes with brass clamps sent out 9 years ago, and one small one sent in 1800.[20]

East India Company officers thus seem to have been guilty of sharp practice, purchasing relatively cheap instruments in London, decorating them, attaching false name-plates, and then selling them at great profit and with little risk in India. One is irresistibly reminded of Ehrlich's characterization of the suppliers of 'meretricious rubbish' in the nineteenth-century piano market, publicans, furniture dealers, and 'professors' of music, who took advantage of high profit margins to undercut reputable specialists, for which they needed only spare cash, knowledge of local demand, and access to suppliers.[21] East India Company captains had all three, and they enjoyed the additional advantage of selling to a market in which there was no access to specialist firms at all. Selling pianos in India was a money-spinner, and everyone knew it.

Large harps do not seems to have been exported to India before the end of the eighteenth century. As in the case of the grand piano and the double bass, their bulk increased transport costs. In a letter to Margaret Fowke, Lady Jones promised to make enquiries about 'a pedal harp', after consulting with Mrs Vansittart, who 'understands them and plays them very well herself'.[22] But harps were still rare in India, and, having made 'every possible enquiry' after one, Lady Jones had to report that her researches had been 'fruitless'.[23] Yet by the 1790s, the desire for these highly fashionable instruments was such that a small export trade began. Before travelling to India in 1798, Edward Clive purchased for his daughter a 'Patent Harp' from Erard & Co. for just over one hundred pounds. Spare strings for the instrument cost a further £19. 3*s.* 6*d.*[24] Around 1800, two further instruments were still in India House, awaiting a decision as to whether duty had been paid on them.

The overall volume of the keyboard instrument trade with India in the late

[19] Wainwright, *Broadwood by Appointment*, 103. [20] Ibid. 102.
[21] C. Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History*, rev. edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 43.
[22] Fowke MS E5, 63; 6 Jan. 1785. [23] Fowke MS E5, 73; 27 Feb. [1785].
[24] Powys MS, Neg 4383.



Plate 4. Arthur William Devis, *Emily and George Mason*, *c.*1794–1795

eighteenth century should not be exaggerated; probably no more than several score of instruments a year were exported. But it was a harbinger of things to come, a fast growing sector of the market, which, when added to other expanding overseas markets, notably in North America, contributed to the dominant position established by London keyboard manufacturers in the early nineteenth century. Piano retail was destined to become the first world-wide music business.

The Distribution of Music

In the weeks before the sailing of a ship belonging to the East India Company, London publishers could expect good business from amateur musicians among the passengers, as they stocked up with the latest music. Much less bulky than most instruments, small collections of sheet music could easily be stored in trunks of belongings. Making purchases of music shortly before departure was a way of ensuring, temporarily at least, access to fashionable repertoire in distant India. It was also normal to commission agents to forward further consignments of music at regular intervals. Whilst in India, the Clives were supplied, through their agent, by John Stanley.[25] The departure for India, usually a moment of major significance in the life of any family, was also an opportune time to purchase musical 'going-away' presents for female relatives remaining in England.

The correspondence of the Ducarel family in the weeks prior to the departure of James and Gerard Gustavus early in 1765 alludes to this period of musical stocking up. Their sister Maria, resident in Bath but soon to join Lady Clive in London, was a keen young harpsichord player, and it was a point of honour for her brothers to ensure that she was well supplied with the newest music. An attempt was made to arrange keyboard lessons with J. C. Bach, at first apparently without success. Gerard Gustavus wrote on 23 January: 'I pity your disappointment with Bach. He is very well known to the Teissiers. And was desir'd by them to call upon you.'[26] A few days later, he received a list of the music, which would be acceptable to his sister as a present, and he promised to 'run to the Strand' to look for it.[27] He called in at the shop of John Walsh, and in a further letter reported to Maria on the outcome of this visit:

Gravesend, *c.*30 January 1765 Gerard Gustavus Ducarel to Maria Ducarel

> I am glad the musick was pleasing to you. Of Bach I am sure. Walsh told me he had printed Du Pluy at the request & recommendation of Burton & gave me so great a Character of it, that I was tempted to prefer it to a new set of Rameau, which I am apt to think spurious, & a new set of Abel. You have both these names already upon your list & I wished to have something new for you. These are all the new harpsichord Musick that is come out. Rameau himself has been dead above a twelvemonth. I fear they only put his name to it. Otherwise I have the highest respect for his Musick. My Aunt Hasset told me she never playd his Musick or Avisons, nothing but God save great George. I laughd in my sleeve pretty well, knowing the reason . . .[28]

There was some interest in the music of Rameau in Anglo-Indian circles. Encouraged by his father, Francis Fowke ordered 'Rameaus Music in three parts'.[29] Joseph Fowke thought that study of this composer's works would give breadth to his daughter's keyboard curriculum: 'You hinted sometime ago an intention of attack-

[25] BL, OIOC, Clive MS G37/box 7; 30 Mar. 1758. [26] GRO, Ducarel MS D2091/F10.
[27] Ducarel MS D2091/F10, 4. [28] Ducarel MS D2091/F10, 6.
[29] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS D17; 20 July 1778.

ing Rameau; I fear his difficulties have discouraged you. I shall not allow you to be a Musician till you are acquainted with all Stiles, and then I will give you leave to decide upon the merit of Composers.'[30] In this family at least, it is probable that interest was stimulated by the comment in Hawkins that 'Mr Handel was ever used to speak of him [Rameau] in terms of great respect.'[31]

Ducarel's own musical interests, like those of many Anglo-Indians, included the canzonets and songs of Jackson, but in the rush of departure, he failed to buy enough copies. On 3 March, his ship by now passing down the English Channel, he wrote to Maria to rectify the omission: 'I hum all Day Jacksons songs. I doat on them for your sake. Pray send me one Book. Mr Teissier will forward them by the Ships of this year, as he is to send me News papers from time to time.'[32] His brother James, writing from the next port of call, reported a charming incident:

Portsmouth, 21 March 1765 James Ducarel to his mother

> Just as I finished the last paragraph, Gusty humm'd an Air of Jacksons, when such was the Effect of that divine Musick (even from *son gosier barbare*) that a Virginia Nightingale till then mute accompanied him with his delightful pipe. We lik'd the Symphony so well that we ask'd the price in order to have sent it to our dear Maria, but alas it belong'd to a rich old dowager and was invaluable.[33]

A fashionable hobby for women was teaching caged birds, usually linnets or canaries, to imitate music. Flageolets were used for the purpose.[34]

The commercial lines of supply for music were much the same as those for instruments. Ships' officers would purchase consignments directly from London publishers. Special deals were on offer: John Bland, for example, in his catalogue of January 1789 proposed: 'The greatest Allowance to Merchants, Captains of Ships, and Country Dealers, who take Quantities for Sale or Exportation.'[35] As wholesale purchasers of music, East India Company officers were thus ranked with provincial retailers.

A small number of detailed lists of music have survived in the Bengal Inventories, and these provide useful evidence of what was exported to India. The longest by far is a substantial collection of music belonging to Thomas Sheeles of Calcutta and Bridgewater:

> *No.1 Music mark'd T Sheeles Esq Calcutta and Bridgewater*
> Bach's etc Periodical Overtures in 8 parts
> Overtures for a Horn in 2 parts 2 Books
> Campioni's Sonatas in 3 Books

30 Fowke MS E5, 50; 4 Sept. 1784.

31 J. Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* (London: Novello, 1875), ii. 919.

32 Ducarel MS D2091/F10, 13.

33 Ducarel MS D2091/F9, 6.

34 R. Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 150.

35 Royal College of Music, XVIII E 19.

M^{c}Carty's Duets for 2 Violins in 2 Books
Abel's Six Symphonies in 6 Books
Pugnani's Six Overtures in 7 Books
Haydn's Six Quatuor's in Books
Bochirinis Six Sonatas in 2 Books

No.2 Music

Handel's Overtures in 4 Books
Stamsnitz's Trios 3 Books revised by the R^{t} Honourable Earl of Kelly
Correlli's Sonatas 3 Books
The Enchanter a Musical Entertainment by Smith
Correlli's 12 Sonatas in 3 Books
30 Scots Songs for the Harpsichord and Voice by Bremner
The Oratoris of Sampson
The Oratoris of Esther by Handel
Acis and Galatea a Masque by Handel
Handel's 12 Grand Concerts 4 Books
L'allegro Il Penseroso ed Il Moderato from Milton the music by Handel
Mich^{l} Arnis Songs and Ballads
Pugnani's Sonatas 3 Books
Overend Organist of Isleworth's 12 Sonatas for Harpsichord
Earl of Kelly's Six Sonatas in 3 Books
Herschel's Six Sonatas 3 Books
D^{r} Arnes Artaxerxes an Opera / music
Campioni's Six Duets 2 Books
Abels Sonatas for Harpsichord 3 Books
Ciampi's Sonatas for Harpsichord 3 Books
Burneys 16 Sonatas for Harpsichord 3 Books
S^{t} Martinis Six Sonatas for the Harpsichord 3 Books
Two Books of Country Dances
A Book of Psalms set to Music

No. 3 Music

3 unbound Books with Green Covers consisting of Music by diff^{t} Composers
Granom's Songs Set to Music
A large Book of Solos for the Harpsichord and other Instruments by Several Hands
Geminiani's Instructions for the Violin
Jackson's Elegies
D^{r} Burneys Sonatas for . . . 3 Books
Grosses Concertos 5 Books and a Books of songs set to Music
3 Books ruled for Music and contg a few Pieces Marbled Covers
2 D^{o} Leather Covers
Signor Campioni's Six Sonatas 3 Books
D^{o} four Sonatas or Duets in 4 Books
Zinerettis five Quartettis in 5 Books
Bach's Periodical Symphonie Periodique
Vento's Six Sonatas 3 Books
The Fao^{rte} Songs in the Opera of Tellimes
Manfredini's Six Sonatas 3 Books

A Book of Ballads
Don Quixote in Spanish
Rutherford's Complete Tutor for the Flute
Richters Six Sonatas 3 Books
Correllis 12 Sonatas 3 Volumes
a Book of Songs
a Volume of St. Martini's Sonatas
Handels 12 Grand Concerts 2 vol^{s}
Bocherinis Six Sonatas in one Book
Telemans Six Sonatas in one d^{o}
Agus's Six Solos one Book
Noferis Six Sonatas 3 Books
Geminianis Concertos one Volume
The airs and symphonies of Love in a Village
A Collect^{n} of new Minuets
24 Fao^{te} Marches
Cervetto's 12 Solos
Vinci's 12 Solos
Tesserini's Duets
Zuccari's method of playing an Adagio
Valli's Six Sonatas 3 Books
Galleoti's Sonatas 2 Books
Figlio's Sonatas or Duets 2 Books
Albertini's Sonatas 2 Vol^{s}
Pugnani's Six Sonatas 3 Books
Bremner's Harpsichord or Spinet Miscellany
De Heiden's Six Sonatas
Cirris's Sonatas 3 Books
Pugnani's Minuets Composed for the King of Denmark's Masquerade
Grassis Duets one Volume
Gerrad's Duets one Vol:
Agus's Trios Two Books
McGibbon's Scots Tunes
A Small Book of Music
a Book ruled for Music
Cocchis Six Quintets
Dottels Six Sonatas
Six Sonatas by Deff^{t} Composers
Handels Concerti Grossi
Pergolese's Sonatas One Book
A Book of Music
a Parcel of Loose Music

No.6 Books
Dr Burney's Treatise on Music

No.9 Books
a Cremona Fiddle sent out to the deceased by Doctor Burney Music Master to the Queen / in a Case / Cost 35 6^{s} in England

No.10
2 Violins and 2 German Flutes in a Case

No.13
a Forte Piano and a Violin in a Case not worth the Package

No.16 Music
Symphonies by Abel and other Composers
Quartettors by Haydn and other Composers
three Books ruled for Music
Bremners Collect^{n} of Marches
Figlio's 12 Sonatas
Babella's 6 Duets
A Book of Music
Daphne and Amintor a Comic opera
Tunes and Songs in the Harlequin Entertainm^{t} of D^{r} Faustus by Arnold
Six Sonatas by
Airs in the Hermit by Collet
24 Favt^{e} Marches for Horse and Foot Guards
2 Bundles of Loose Music
M^{c}Gibbon's Scots Tunes
Minuets for the Haut Boy
2 Books of Fav^{te} Marches
The Cure of Saul
a Book of Minuets etc
The Music of Love in a Village
Mozarts Six Sonatas

No.24
Some Music Books.[36]

Every year, many such collections of music were advertised in India, though usually without details of the individual items. Officers attempting to sell music in the Calcutta auction houses could at least be sure of finding out very rapidly what would attract a buyer and what not. It is arguable that collections of this type, traded in a local market like Calcutta, bring us into more immediate contact with amateur taste than do the all-embracing lists of publishers' catalogues. Analysis of the list points to a number of features compatible with the Indian market. The broad categories are as follows:

Chamber/Keyboard Music	70%
Vocal Music	15%
Ancient Music	10%
Orchestral Music	5%

On the whole, the collection reflects what was available in London in the 1760s and 1770s. As far as can be determined, the publishers represented in it include Walsh, Bremner, Randall, Welcker, Johnson, and Thompson. The limited amount of

[36] BL, OIOC, Bengal Inventories, 1774–1776, P155/4.

orchestral music, only symphonies by Bach, Abel, and Pugnani, is not surprising, since a public concert tradition had yet to emerge in Calcutta. Instrumental chamber music is the dominant category. About 50 per cent of this is by Italian composers, 25 per cent by German and British composers, and 25 per cent consists of 'light' categories, such as minuets, country dances, and marches. The Italian composers represented in the list were of the generation who flooded into London in the mid-century, as suggested by the dates of their first known arrival in England: Giacobbe Cervetto (1738); Vincenzo Ciampi (1748); Giuseppi Agus (1750); Gioacchino Cocchi (1757); Giovanni Noferi (*c.*1757); Pietro Grassi Florio (1760); Salvatore Galeotti (*c.*1760); Mattia Vento (1763); Giovanni Cirri (1764); Gaetano Pugnani (1767). All of the remaining Italians had their music published in London. Although it is not always possible to identify the precise publications, it is at least very clear which were the favoured genres: there is in fact a marked predominance of sonata repertoire. The relative paucity of quintets (one volume), quartets (three volumes), and string trios (two volumes) is entirely consistent with the lack of violas and cellos in India at this period, while the dominance of sonatas equates readily with the large number of amateur violin and flute players in India. It is noticeable that, other than keyboard music, there are relatively few items in genres which might be expected to appeal to women, such as accompanied sonatas, English guitar music, and Italian opera songs. Although there are a number of items in the list that might refer either to trio sonatas or accompanied sonatas—the Herschel set, for instance, might be either Jacob's trio sonatas or William's accompanied sonatas—there are few unambiguous examples of the more modern genre, represented by the Mozart sonatas, and perhaps the Abel and Richter sets. Other aspects of this list reflect general London taste. A lack of French music is also characteristic of London publishers' catalogues at this period. In 1762, John Potter characterized the music of 'our inveterate enemies the *French*', as having 'little taste or merit'.[37] The absence of French music in India relates to the prevalence of this view in London, rather than to any local antipathy to Gallic culture in the wake of the Anglo-French conflicts in India. The light instrumental genres represent only a quarter of the total chamber music, but the real deluge of such publications began only during the last two decades of the century. The selection of 'ancient' music, Corelli, Handel, and Geminiani, is as expected, and it probably included recent editions, such as those by Randall of the oratorios *Sampson* (1769), *Acis and Galatea* (1769), and *L'Allegro* (1770).

There is no question that the Sheeles stock represents the interests of the Anglo-Indian violinist. Indeed, more generally, the late flowering of the trio sonata genre in England, amply represented in this inventory, is perhaps as good an indication as any of the strength of the market for amateur violin music and thus of the significant number of dilettante violinists seeking to purchase serious, if not virtuoso, violin music.[38] Despite the size of this library of instrumental music, it is possible that it had been acquired for personal use. It will be useful to compare this list with the one of

[37] S. Sadie, in H. Diack Johnstone and R. Fiske, eds., *Music in Britain: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 337.
[38] Ibid. 336.

music belonging to John Holme in 1771.[39] In this case, the inclusion of several multiple copies of works appears to show that it had been purchased, probably from a ship, for retail:

3 Hand Bells
2 Violins in Cases
1 Harpsichord
3 Stands for Musick Books

Catalogue of his books
Brown on Musick

Musick vols.	
Handles Chamber Airs / half bound	7
Ditto Concertos for the Organ	1
Ditto Minuets	4
Ditto Marches	4
Avisons 12 Sonatas for Harpsichord and Violin	8
Martines 6 Sonatas	3
Ditto 6 Duets	1
Mahauts 6 Duets	1
Girands Ditto	1
Duets by Different Hands	1
Correlles Sonatas	6
Concertos by Several Authors	1
Gronomaris 6 Sonatas	1
Albertis 8 Sonatas	1
Stamitzs' 6 Sonatas / wants primo	2
Granomons' Sonatas Opera 7.8	2
Carusis and Patruses' 6 Sonatas	3
Collections of Odes etc	1
Ditto Duets etc	1
Tassarines' art of playing on the Violin	1
Pasqualis' 12 English songs	1
Ditto Rules for playing thorough Base	1
Ditto Rules for the Harpsichord	2
Pasqualis 6 Sonatas	1
Bremner's Scotch Songs	3
Craigs' Ditto	1
McGibbons' Ditto	1
Bremners' Scotch Dances	1
Ditto Ditto Marches	1
Oswalds' Calledonian Companion	1
Longdons' Songs	1
Arnes Ditto	2
Collections' of Harpsichord Lessons	1
Ditto favorite songs by Bremner	1

[39] Bengal Inventories, 1771, P154/70.

Ditto English songs half bound	3
Ditto Minuets and Country Dances bound	3
Ditto Hymns	1
The Maid of the mill opera	1
Midas Ditto	1
Artaxerxes Ditto	1
Love in a Village Ditto	1
Cymon Ditto	1
Love in a Village Ditto	1
Love in the City Ditto	1
Cymon Ditto	1
Daphne and Amintor Ditto	1
Midas Ditto	1
Cymon Ditto	1
Thomas and Sally Ditto	1
The Jovial Crue Ditto	1
Love in a Village Ditto	1
The Maid of the mill Ditto	1
La Bouna Figliuosla Ditto	1
Comic Tunes in the Ginie	2
Collections of Minutes	2
Instructions for the German Flute	3
Ditto Violin	1
Ditto Harpsichord	1
Collections of Minuets and Country Dances	16
Collections of Songs	6
Stamitz 6 Sonatas	3
Oratorios	3
Geminiani on the Violin	1
Ditto 12 Sonatas in Score	1
Ditto 12 Solas	1
Geminianis 12 Concertas opera 2d and 3d	7
Collections of written musick	12
Ditto of written musick and musick papers	

Catalogue of Books

Playfords introduction to musick
Simpsons Compendium of Musick
Smith on ye Phylosophy of musical sounds
Pasquals' art of fingering the Harpsichord
Thorough Bass made easy
Rudiments of Musick
Thompsons' collection of 100 Minutes
Martins' Sonatas

This list resembles the earlier one, with its strong preponderance of violin sonatas, and the almost inevitable selection of 'ancient' music, but there are some differences of emphasis. Publications by Bremner are prominent. The selection of Scottish

music, songs, dances, and marches, draws attention to the fact that arrangements of national airs from Scotland and Ireland were finding an increasing market in India, as larger numbers of recruits from these countries began to enter the employ of the Company. The list includes a substantial selection of Arne's music from the 1760s. Also worthy of note is the number of instruction books: three for the violin; four for the harpsichord, including one each on fingering and figured bass; and one for the flute. The availability of professional musicians in India to teach was at best uncertain, especially in inland settlements, and this kind of basic self-help instruction manual might have been expected to sell well.

The predominance of violin sonatas in both these inventories raises one interesting question: who played the keyboard parts? In the early 1770s, there were still relatively few amateur women players in India. Keen amateur violinists might therefore have set aside any qualms they felt about the identity of the harpsichord as a woman's instrument, in order to learn the techniques of accompanying. Some published courtesy books openly categorized the harpsichord as an 'effeminate' instrument. John Berkenhout informed his readers: 'As two gentlemen were passing the window, I heard one of them exclaim—"I hate to see a *man* at the Harpsichord!" I had never before annexed the idea of effeminacy to that instrument, but from that moment, I began to be of that gentleman's opinion.'[40] In India, through necessity, many were obliged to set aside this stereotype, even though the shadow of impropriety remained. On one occasion, Margaret Fowke noted with a wry amusement that contains a certain edge that several of her male acquaintances were taking up the study of keyboard accompaniment: 'Playdell is going to study thorough-bass; Morse is writing a treatise upon it; Messink to be independent of all his accompanists is going to study Pasquali. The fellow will get a smattering and be ten times more troublesome than ever.'[41] There are many other reports of men playing the harpsichord in India at this time, for example, John Shore, who assisted Sir William Jones in his studies of Indian music.

On the whole, the Bengal Inventories provide disappointingly few details of small collections of music owned by Anglo-Indian amateurs. It is common to find an entry which simply notes a 'parcell of musick books', usually with a single violin or flute. The contents of these small collections are rarely specified. One exception is the small selection owned by Philip Philpott. His collection consisted of 'Handels Overtures and Concerto, Maid of the Mill, Minuets, Country Dances, Songs etc, Duets for Violin, Bass and Garman Flute.' Even in a tiny collection, the range is still from 'ancient' music to country dances.[42] One interesting statistic is the growing tendency for instrument owners to possess music. In the 1760s, about 20 per cent of estates with musical instruments include music; in the 1770s, this rises to 35 per cent. The increase reflects the growth of a mass market for music of the simplest kinds for male amateurs. The very limited commitment of individuals, most of whose holdings of music would have been limited to a few inexpensive items, was increasingly

[40] Leppert, *Music and Image*, 122.
[41] Fowke MS E4, 87.
[42] Bengal Inventories, 1768, P154/67.

offset by the large numbers involved. Only from the perspective of high culture could this be viewed as a decline in musical taste. What it more fairly represents, at least in the case of the large number of amateur musicians in India, is the expansion of the culture of printed music into new sections of English society.

The quantity of music entering India through Calcutta retailers was large, but even so there are many indications that demand often exceeded supply. One factor was undoubtedly the insatiable appetite for up-to-date repertoire characteristic of any colonial population at this time; any suspicion that music on sale in Calcutta was outmoded in London would cause a rapid loss of appeal. A more common problem, though, was the difficulty of obtaining specific pieces. This was partly a consequence of the length of the supply lines, but the main cause was the lack of a well-established system of distribution. Amateurs in England could order from London publishers, or visit regional retail outlets, or join circulating libraries. In India, the speed with which non-specialist retailers and captains appeared in the market place with music to sell, before setting sail again, militated against the provision of a customer-oriented service. General tastes rather than the specific requirements of individuals were serviced in this manner. Committed amateurs coped with the problem in a variety of ways. It was possible to order directly from London, although a year might elapse between the dispatch of an order and the receipt of the music, or a sought-after piece might be found in one or other of the collections of music constantly being offered for sale by individuals about to return to Europe. Lists of what was available were in informal circulation.

With their precisely focused musical interests, members of the Fowke family made a habit of ordering music directly from London. When his daughter failed to send her list for the following year in time for a departing ship, Joseph wrote to complain of her indolence:

Calcutta, 12 December 1783 Joseph Fowke to Margaret Fowke

> Your Indent for Musick to be provided by Capt. Cooke arrived after his departure. Most likely you have lost this opportunity by Procrastination, a failing you might easily get the better of by a little practice. Pray do not miss a second opportunity. Write instantly to your Correspondent to provide you Musick, Harpsichord Wires etc. and send them to Capt. Cooke who will find some way of getting them safe to you. You may add to your list the following Articles on my account:
>
> Corelli's Trios
> Handels' Concertos for the Violin and Organ
> Vivaldi's Concertos called the Seasons
> A fine Fiddle Bow—Light, and the Hair round and even as possible
> Half a dozen eggs of fine Resin, such as was sent to my Father with his Violins, which do not clog the Bow
> A few Rings of Fiddle strings choice and new
> A dozen fiddle Bridges
> 2 dozen fiddle pegs.[43]

[43] Fowke MS E5, 12.

One year later, the music ordered by the Fowkes from London arrived in Calcutta on board the *Cornwallis*. Joseph had in fact ordered a number of musical items on behalf of his son: 'By my letters by the E. Cornwallis I find some things belonging to your Brother were packed up with my Violencello, of which I found no Memorandum. These were some fiddle strings, some Resin, a Violin Bow, and a Sett of Corelli's Trios.'[44] The bill from the London publisher, William Napier, arrived soon after this, and Joseph forwarded it to his son:

London, 19 November 1783
Copy Francis Fowke Esq.
Bo^{rt} of W^{m} Napier

	£	s	d
30 Rings Violin firsts √		15	
10 d^{o} d^{o} seconds √		5	
5 d^{o} d^{o} thirds √		3	4
15 d^{o} d^{o} fourths √		7	6
Ball Rosin and best Violin bow √		11	6
Sett Corellis trios √	1	1	6
English opera Rosina ×		8	6
Gratna Green ×		8	6
Poor Soldier √		6	6
Spanish barber ×		5	6
Son in law ×		5	6
Italian Opera Medionte √		3	6
Il Conisto √		3	6
Il Triomfo √		5	6
L'Olimpiade √		4	6
Zenicra Azore √		1	6
Sett Harps^{d} strings N^{o} 4 etc Double quantity sent to Peggy by JF		8	6
	6	5	4

N.B. Those mark'd thus √ are pack'd in the Violincello and Tenor and sent to your Father. The four with × are inclos'd in your Trunk p^{r} the Earl Cornwallis; under the care of Mr Hodgson 2^{d} Officer.[45]

A note from Robert Morell, the agent, confirmed that the unbound music would be in 'a Violincello case going to your father', but that 'The Ladies Amusement and Cocchis Duettos Catches and Glees' had had to be omitted.[46]

The Fowkes did not neglect the important second-hand market for music. When one of their musical acquaintances, John Shore, decided to leave Calcutta in 1785, Joseph alerted both his children. Margaret was asked: 'Do you want Violin or Harpsichord Music? Of the first there is great Variety in Shore's Collection if your Brother chuses it.'[47] Francis was advised to take first refusal of anything in the list: 'Shore has a fine Collection of Music, and tells me he has had many applications for

[44] Fowke MS E5, 54; 20 Nov. 1784. [45] Fowke MS E6A, 38.
[46] Fowke MS E6A, 39a. [47] Fowke MS E5, 60; 5 Jan. 1785.

it. He ask'd me if I thought you woud like it. I told him Yes, so you will have the Refusal. It is excessive cheap not the ful cost in England, and you can always get the same money for it here—At any rate you can lose nothing by having the Refusal—Shore has promis'd to write to you about it—I have desir'd him to send you a list . . .'[48] Francis bought at least some of the music, and the matter was handled by the firm of Paxton & Cockrell, who transferred his payment to Shore, and made arrangements for the dispatch of the music:

Calcutta, 6 February 1785 Paxton & Cockrell to Francis Fowke

> The Bill in favor of Mr Shore is accepted by us and shall be duly paid. When I dined with Mr Cockrell today, he promised to send the Music books tomorrow and in consequence orders are given to our people to have a boat got with all possible speed on which the Books shall be dispatched under Charge of a trusty Servant who may be depended upon.[49]

A good source of cheap second-hand music in India was the sale of goods from the estates of deceased persons. A number of music books from the estate of John Holme failed even to reach 40 per cent of European prices. The administrator therefore valued them at this level, with the intention that he would 'himself gain any advantage later'.[50]

Faced with long delays in the arrival of orders from London, the Fowkes often borrowed music to have it copied. When he returned to Benares in 1783, Francis was keen that his sister should continue to study the continuo part of some Corelli trios, so that she could accompany him when the two next met. Simply out of affection for her brother, she was willing to countenance this task, but away from his presence she found it hard to sustain any interest. She confessed: 'I have quite neglected Corelli since you left me. I never played them but once, and finding the charm gone, I have not touched them since.'[51] Nevertheless, her brother continued to insist that she study the pieces, and so, reluctantly, she took them up again. In order that both he and his sister should have access to a set of parts, Francis ordered a set from Napier in London, but as this could not arrive in India before 1784 it was now necessary to make arrangements for the distribution of the existing set of parts. What ensued, a small saga of Anglo-Indian musical life, well illustrates the administrative complexity that could easily overtake even the simplest of musical activities.

As it would be much easier to borrow the Corelli trios in Calcutta than in Benares, Margaret first made arrangements to send her brother their existing set:

> Merely from forgetfulness I forgot to put up Corelli either in the baggage boats or camp baskets—The next time I send any you will have them—for I can easily get Golding's here.[52]

Having found that her brother's violin would not fit in the camp baskets, she had sent it down to be loaded on the slow baggage boats, but he contacted her just in time to get it sent up more quickly:

[48] Fowke MS E6A, 37. [49] Fowke MS D12, 66. [50] Bengal Inventories, 1771, P154/70.
[51] Fowke MS E4, 55–6. [52] Fowke MS E4, 55–6; 26 April 1783.

Your second letter which I got today arrived just in time to take the violin box out of the baggage boats which were going—I dispatched a man after it without a moment's delay and have written to Cummings with orders to furnish a light boat for this box—I have likewise ordered him to put your other violin which came out of my pinnace into this boat . . .[53]

In the end, Margaret decided to entrust a musical friend with the delivery of the Corelli; it would be slower, but at least he could practise the second violin part.[54]

When, a few months later, it was decided that Margaret herself should travel to Benares to stay with her brother, she knew that she would have to resume practising the continuo part, which, in the absence of her brother, she had put to one side. She now had to borrow a copy from another friend, in order to have them copied:

I have borrowed Golding's solos. I should like to change 6 Trios for 6 solos. The reason is that I should like to take out these basses in order to accompany them exactly, but I wish to return Golding his book as I imagine he will like to practise them. How it will be saving time if Soonder can copy out these and you will take them for trios. There are a great many chords, however, let it be just as you please for I will most exactly perform my promise.[55]

Golding was possibly the Mr Goolden whose house in Bankipore, between Benares and Patna, was described by Dean Mahomet thus: 'It was a fine spacious building, finished in the English style; and as it stood on a rising ground, it seemed to rear its dome in stately pride, over the aromatic plains and spicy groves that adorned the landscape below, commanding an extensive prospect of all the fertile vales along the winding Ganges flowery banks.'[56] Apparently, the idea was to copy out the keyboard part of Golding's set as solo keyboard pieces in the manner of Walsh's *The Score of the Four Operas, containing 48 Sonatas* (London, *c.*1735), which allowed for the possibility of solo keyboard performance ('they also make compleat Lessons for the Harpsichord'). Margaret was clearly hoping that this would be a more rewarding way of practising this repertoire.

Although the intention was to have the continuo part copied out, there was insufficient time for the Indian servant to make the necessary duplicate score. It later emerged that Margaret had retained the borrowed copy even after leaving for Benares. A letter of remonstrance from her father soon arrived:

Calcutta, 21 September 1783 — Joseph Fowke to Margaret Fowke

Dear Daughter,

Mr Golding had applied to me for Corelli's Trios before the receipt of your letters, and was much alarmed at my not being able to give any account of them, as he had taken the liberty of lending to you what did not belong to him, which was certainly a great breach of Trust. He begs you will restore them to Mr Baillie, the rightful proprietor, who is at Mr Cleveland's at Boglipoor. Pray don't fail.

How could you imagine that 48 Trios in three parts cou'd be copied in three days? I will venture to affirm it cou'd not be done with close application, in four months, nor wou'd anybody chuse to be deprived of their Books for half the time. Perhaps

[53] Fowke MS E4, 66. [54] Fowke MS E4, 87. [55] Fowke MS E4, 55–6.
[56] Fisher, *The Travels of Dean Mahomet*, 21.

Newman may be able to copy over a few of the Bases for your practice before you reach Boglipoor . . .[57]

With no hint of an apology for this choleric outburst, Joseph then realized that he had misinterpreted his daughter's request:

In reading over your letter a second time I find you only want one Trio copied (if you have carefully expressed yourself,) and this I will endeavour to get done to accompany this.[58]

Meanwhile, Margaret was working hard at her part, to make as much progress as possible before she was obliged to surrender her copy. She suggested that Francis might now send down her part:

I played Corelli yesterday and will do all I possibly can to have my part ready. By the way my father has written to me to tell me that it is Mr Golding's request that I will restore Corelli to Mr Bailey who is the owner and he is at Baglepoor. If boats are as cheap up the country as they are down you might send a hircarrah in a little boat for 8 or 10 rupees with my thorough-bass part. I don't know who Mr Bailey is, but if we stay long enough to make any acquaintance with him, I shall ask to keep his Corelli (the bass I mean) till I get to B[enares].[59]

In the event, she was allowed to keep the copy:

We leave Rajmaul at this instant. I found Bailey here, who has obligingly allowed me the use of Corelli's thorough-bass part, so you need not send it.[60]

This story of the distribution of a set of Corelli across the Gangetic plains is an extreme example of a common phenomenon: the large amount of organization that music-making in India required. The effect of the climate on people and instruments, the large distances between settlements, a mobile style of life with frequent journeys, the scarcity of replacements, often conspired to make the arrangement of even the simplest chamber music a formidable task of organization. From the point of view of the music retailer, this opened up the possibility of the sale of multiple copies (in order to forestall problems) or of replacements sets, when the inevitable losses occurred.

The Fowke family regularly used an Indian to help fill gaps in their library. The use of Indian servants as copyists of Western music was inexpensive, but not without problems. Since the early days of the East India Company, English travellers had marvelled at how adept local craftsmen were at copying any European artefact. Margaret refers to the servant who copied her music as 'Soonder', literally 'soontah burdah' or stick-bearer, an 'official' position. Evidence of Indians actively engaged with European music is extremely rare in the eighteenth century, and the details of Margaret Fowke's musical servant are worth giving. We first encounter him when she reported that she and her father were (as usual) in competition for his musical

[57] Fowke MS E4, 431. Perhaps this was Augustus Cleveland, Hickey's friend. See J. P. Losty, *Calcutta: City of Palaces* (London: BL, 1990), 62. William Baillie, who went to Calcutta in 1777, later published engravings of India. See Losty, *Calcutta: City of Palaces*, 64.

[58] Fowke MS E4, 435. [59] Fowke MS E4, 463. [60] Fowke MS E4, 479.

services.[61] Joseph wanted him to copy some manuscript violin concertos of Tartini, while Margaret was anxious that the 'poor youth' should set to work on some Jackson canzonets, that she had mislaid:

Calcutta, 6 May 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> G. [Joseph Fowke] has employed Soonder for some time past in copying Tartini. The work will be valuable, as they are esteemed fine pieces, and have never been published. McArthur procured the manuscript by some chance. It is an unlucky interruption however to my work which at best goes on rather slowly. I was endeavouring to finish Jackson that I might return Mrs P[lowden] her book. I always make him do a little that it may not stand quite still. I have never found my set of Jackson. Unless it is in the pinnace it is certainly gone. Messink has given me one of the sets, so that I am only one set the poorer.[62]

It was not long, however, before music copying had to be put aside in favour of more urgent matters: 'Soonder has not been able to be here very constantly. I don't mean that he has been neglectful, but he has had so much business with the accounts, packing up, baggage boats, and other business—besides Tartini.'[63] This servant at least had wide-ranging duties. As time went on, Margaret seemed to become ever more dependent on the copyist, and ever more dissatisfied with the standard of his work:

Calcutta, 8 August 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> I am exceedingly vexed at the inaccuracies you mention in the music I sent. I knew that the first essays of the Burrah Soonder were not very elegant but I really thought they were perfectly intelligible and correct or I should have employed the other. In future I will always have your glees copied in the fair and beautiful hand of the Chottah Soonder, for I know how vexatious it must be to have an incorrect copy where you have no other to compare with. Soonder is very idle and often absent. I should think a word or two of reproof from you would improve his industry. At the same time I do not wish his hopes to be checked altogether as I can do nothing without him.'[64]
>
> Soonder is so extremely remiss that I must beg your interference. He is a very necessary but an incorrigibly lazy fellow. I made him write those glees for you, and it is almost all he has done a great while past. He makes idle excuses of absence frequently for a whole morning on my father's business, and frequently either himself, his mother, cousin or sister are so ill that it is impossible he can attend here at all.[65]

Her father took a more indulgent attitude, as he often did when commenting on the problems of musicians and musical servants: 'I am very sorry Chootah Sunder has fallen under your displeasure, but you must make some allowances . . . after all perhaps he has never been employed in the same way before.'[66] The Indian copyist accompanied Margaret to Benares, where he was injured in a riding accident.[67]

[61] Fowke MS E4, 15–16. [62] Fowke MS E4, 79. [63] Fowke MS E4, 95.
[64] Fowke MS E4, 239. [65] Fowke MS E4, 285. [66] Fowke MS F3, 34.
[67] Fowke MS E4, 581.

Whether he was musically trained, understanding what he was copying, or was merely a skilled replicator of what was on the page, is hard to say. So far as is known, no examples of eighteenth-century music made by Indian copyists have survived.

The opening of a specialist music shop early in 1785 was a welcome development for the Fowkes, offering them the prospect of dealing with a more reliable supplier of music. Francis was coincidentally in Calcutta, and Margaret wrote immediately, asking him to look out for a number of items, including 'Metastaseo, the Italian of which is esteemed remarkably easy'.[68] Not surprisingly, Joseph went to see what Handel was available:

Calcutta, 18 August 1785 Joseph Fowke to Francis Fowke

> Stone has for sale Handel's Overtures in 4 parts for Chamber Concerts; if you shou'd incline to purchase them, I will buy the use of them for a few months till a set of my own arrives which I expect by the Surprit. Stone has been sadly abused for letting you have Handels Songs in parts when there were no other Set to be had in the place.[69]

Stone's most significant import, however, was a consignment of Haydn's harpsichord music, apparently new to Calcutta.[70]

From the mid-1780s, a small number of newspaper advertisements list the individual composers and works in consignments of imported music, and these reflect the newly fashionable composers Haydn and Pleyel, and include genres such as the symphony and quartet, which were now regularly being performed in subscription concerts. On 27 October 1791, for example, Munro & Miller advertised the following new music: 'Overtures, Quartettos, Duets, Trios, Sonatas, and Reels—Airs, Glees and Operas—various Scotch, English and French songs, with music for the Harpsichord, Violin, Flute, etc, by the first Masters.' In a subsequent notice, these masters were named as Ignance [*sic*] Pleyel, Farchi [Tarchi?], Dow, Dunkeild etc etc.' The strong impact made by Haydn's music in Calcutta is very evident from the following advertisement of music imported on the *Berrington* in 1793:

> English Operas, of the [P]irate, Enchanted Wood, Surrender of Calais, Harford Bridge and the Prisoner.
> New Marches, Glees, English and Italian Songs.
> Book of Symphonies by Hayd'n, Pleydel, Boghi etc.
> Quartettos, trios, and Duettos by Hayd'n, Pleydel, Dessek, Elfort, and Kotsuara.
> Lessons by Hayd'n, Pleydel, Dessek, Clementi, Attwood etc.

Spelling as usual is haphazard, Pleyel's name being contaminated by the well-known Anglo-Indian family, Playdell.[71] The selection of composers provides a fair reflection of the range of instrumental music being heard in London around the time

[68] Fowke MS E4, 567. [69] Fowke MS E6A, 66.
[70] Fowke MS E7, 26; Hooghly, 4, Apr. 1785. [71] *Calcutta Gazette*, 19 Sep. 1793.

of the Haydn visits. Haydn's popularity is further confirmed in a shorter notice by Stewart & Brown, of music to be sold on commission by 'Hayden, Jackson, Clementine [*sic*] and Shield'.[72] In 1794, advertisements start to name the publishers of consignments of new music, from which it is possible to deduce that Napier and Bland were especially active suppliers of the Indian market.[73]

[72] *Calcutta Gazette*, 31 Oct. 1793.

[73] *Calcutta Gazette*, 2, 9, 16, and 30 Oct. 1793.

2

Professional Musicians in India

The Governor's Band

In the early seventeenth century, the first English factories in India had access to a regular supply of visiting professional musicians on shore leave from East India Company ships. Once this source began to dwindle, it became necessary to consider whether musicians should be employed permanently in India. By the early eighteenth century, the Governor of Madras had started to maintain a regular band of musicians.[1] The nature of this ensemble is not certain, but it seems likely that it was a string band. From the mid-century, there are periodic references to groups of fiddlers in the service of the leading political personalities. Before the Battle of Plassey, Clive sent his players to Orme in Madras, who acknowledged their safe arrival: 'I have received your consignment of Fiddlers. I pay them. They get victualls with the Governor's band.'[2] The origins of the string band in Calcutta are not known, but, by the time of the occupation of the city in 1756, there were six musicians. A list of inhabitants who bore arms at the siege of the city on 1 July includes: 'Fidlers: Ling, Tuball, Hilmbrat, Janniko, Heneriko, John.' Of these, one (Janniko) is identified as having been killed, another (Lyng) as having been in the group which escaped to the ships. A third (John) was described ten years later as having served seven governors of Bengal.[3]

Much more information survives about the band accompanying Clive on his return to India in 1764. The dramatic desertion of his four musicians in South America, ostensibly to serve in the opera house at Rio de Janeiro, caused a significant diplomatic incident. The ensuing flurry of letters casts a good deal of light on the circumstances of employment of India-bound professional musicians. The men had originally been chosen by Lady Clive on the advice of John Stanley:

[1] I. Woodfield, *English Musicians in the Age of Exploration* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1995), 243.

[2] BL, OIOC, Orme MS Various, No. 293, 20; 5 May 1757.

[3] S. C. Hill, *Bengal in 1756–1757: A Selection of Public and Private Papers dealing with the Affairs of the British in Bengal during the Reign of Siraj-Uddaulah*, 3 vols. (London, 1905), i. 41; iii. 75, 416.

n.d. **[*c.*May 1764]**

Lady Clive hopes if the Musicians behave well, my Lord will be kind to them, and desires to observe that Mr Robertson has a great Genius for drawing, and may be useful on board, and in India. The Harpsichord in my Lord's Cabin is Mr Robertson's.

Groneman	£150	(Musicians Wages per Annum)
Robertson	£150	
Shueman	£100	
Waterhouse	£100	

Mr Strachey will examine the Books of Music, and see that the Musicians do not mislay, or abuse them as Lady Clive hopes to see the Music come back safe.[4]

By any standards, a salary of £150 was a good one; Wilhelm Cramer, the premier violinist in England, was paid the same amount in the 1770s for leading a whole season at the King's Theatre. As was usually the case with the recruitment of musicians for India, no individuals of outstanding repute could be persuaded to embark, but if Groneman can be identified as Johann Albertus Groneman and Schuman as Friedrich Theodor Schumann, both of whom had music published in London during the 1760s, the players were at least better than the usual assortment of nonentities hired for service with the Company.

When Clive's ship was blown off course, a decision was taken to put in to Rio de Janeiro. The musicians were allowed to disembark, so that they could offer their services to the musical public of the colony. Permission to do this was usually granted; it was a useful way for musicians to supplement their income, but Clive soon had good cause to regret his decision. It quickly became apparent that their talents were superior to anything on offer locally, and the inevitable result was that their services were openly canvassed for a longer engagement. To put it bluntly, inducements were offered to persuade them to quit Clive's service. Edmund Maskelyne, Lady Clive's brother, could see what was about to happen:

Rio Janeiro, 19 October 1764 Edmund Maskelyne to Margaret Clive

> We want another Clarinet or two very much. Robinson and Waterhouse are the only decent modest hands of the band. Groneman's execution is prodigious but either he or we want taste in not liking the squeaking and groaning tricks he plays with the Fiddle. They are so highly caressed by the Fidalgos that I fancy we shall be obliged to pack them off before the ship sails.[5]

Faced with the choice between the patronage of Clive and the offer of a job in Rio, the musicians all decided to desert. Clive, the victor of Plassey, was not a man to take such a humiliation with good grace. Letters began to fly in all directions. First he wrote to an English resident for assistance:

S[to] Christovo, 24 October [1764] Robert Clive to Mr Burridge

> A Servant of mine, a Fidler and Player on the French Horn, has had the Insolence to disobey my Commands and upon being order'd on Board a Ship attempted to make his

[4] BL, OIOC, Clive MS G37/box 79. [5] Clive MS G37/box 15/1.

escape but is now confined in the Guard Room, I desire you will inform the Viceroy of this in my name and desire he may be confin'd in Prison until further orders from me.[6]

Edmund Maskelyne, who wrote to keep Lady Clive in touch with what was happening, was of the view that the musicians would soon regret their decision, the Viceroy being 'generally and justly detested'.[7] Clive's secretary also wrote to give news of the affair, blaming, as the patriotic Englishman abroad was wont to do in such circumstances, the machinations of priests.[8] A few days later, one of the musicians was taken into custody by the Viceroy, but Clive seemed 'determin'd not to receive him, unless the others are also deliver'd up'.[9] He now dispatched an imperial thunderbolt of a letter, threatening to turn the affair into a major incident between the nations of Portugal and England, with thinly veiled hints about future trading relations:

5 November 1764, St. Cristovo Robert Clive to the Viceroy of Rio de Janeiro

Among my domestick Servants, there were four Musicians, whom I hired in England at a great Expense, for the Amusement of the Government of Calcutta, these I brought on Shore, merely to entertain this Town; and being informed that the Inhabitants were Admirers of Musick, I permitted my Band to go to any private Families who might be desirous of hearing them perform. Your Excellency is not unacquainted with the Consequence of this Indulgence—They were found to excell all those of their Profession in this Settlement, and Priests and others were hereupon instructed to seduce them. I had indeed been frequently inform'd, that such an Attempt would be made, nay I received several Intimations of your Excellency's Intention to facilitate and encourage the Execution of the Design, that they might be inveigled to stay here, and be employed at the Opera, after my Departure. But as it was impossible for a liberal Mind to entertain so mean a Suspicion against a Man in your exalted Station, I still continued to let my Servants go at large. Had I not trusted to your Honour, they should have been long ago secure on Shipboard; and how little reason I had to repose such a confidence has been seen by the Event.

When I no longer doubted of the Artifices that were practising, I caused one of these Fellows to be apprehended, and put under Custody of your Guard. I wrote to Mr Burish directing him to signify my desire that the Man should be secured 'till further orders. He did so. He communicated my Letter to the Commanding Officer; who instead of confining the Prisoner, admitted him to his own Table, and a few hours after, released him in a very extraordinary Manner. By an express Order from your Excellency, he deliver'd him to a single Person, Mr Burish, who though a native of England, is a Subject of Portugal, a Man who had neither Authority to receive, nor Power to detain him. This Proceeding of your Excellency has shewn that the Intimations I have mentioned, were not groundless, and your Conduct since hath in my Opinion, fully proved their Validity.

My Musicians afterwards took refuge in a Church, which by your Law, can only afford Sanctuary to Criminals, and as they were not of that Denomination, I am

6 Clive MS G37/box 4/1.
7 Clive MS G37/box 15/1; Edmund Maskelyne to Margaret Clive, 31 Oct. 1764.
8 Clive MS G37/box 7/17; Henry Strachey to Margaret Clive, 30 Oct. 1764.
9 Clive MS G37/box 7/17; Henry Strachey to Margaret Clive, 3 Nov. 1764.

> confident they might have been seized, even at the Altar. But they were all suffered to escape.
>
> I was too well acquainted with the Extent of your Power to doubt your being able still to recover them. I accordingly demanded them from your hands. Your Excellency is, here, the Representative of the King of Portugal, and I expected from you that Justice which the King himself would not refuse to a British subject in his Dominions. Could it be conceived that your Excellency's Authority, which cannot be eluded by the meanest slave in the remotest part of your Government, would be baffled by three Fidlers, dressed in laced Cloaths, carrying with them a large Quantity of Baggage, and escorted into the Country by a Priest? . . .
>
> I leave to your own Breast, to determine the Construction I must put upon your Excellency's Behaviour, in refusing Admittance on Monday last, to the Two Gentlemen deputed by me to give Information that three of the Fidlers were then concealed in St. Bent's church.
>
> Once more Sir, I demand them—I demand them as British Subjects, and in the name of His Britannick Majesty . . .
>
> As I am informed that Schuman is again taken into Custody, I shall send an officer with a Guard to receive him . . .[10]

Later in this lengthy diatribe, Clive claimed that he would not have taken the matter personally, but, British honour being at stake, he had had no choice but to persist. He pointed out that in the Portuguese interest he had already refused many requests from inhabitants of Rio to travel on to Bengal with him, and he felt that he deserved similar consideration from the Viceroy. In the absence of co-operation, he was determined to ensure that Portuguese commercial interests in India would suffer. Few documents cast so strong a light on the diplomatic importance of musicians overseas. Servants they undoubtedly were, yet their symbolic significance far transcended their lowly personal status. Their loss was taken by Clive as a devastating blow, not just to his personal authority, as a man who could not control his own staff, but to the prestige of the British State. Personal considerations hardly entered the equation. Indeed, the defection of the harpsichord player with his instrument could have put an end to the musical nightmare with Mrs Sumner that Clive had been enduring ever since he left England.[11] In reply, the Viceroy rather tartly asked Clive to reflect on whether he should really be held responsible for 'any disorders that your servants ('domestiques') or musicians might wish to commit'. He also promised to continue to look for them, an undertaking of limited value, in view of the imminent departure of the English ship.[12]

According to one report, Clive was so furious that he was even planning to kidnap the Viceroy, if he could be tricked into coming on board:

Cape Town, 5 January 1765

> The Portuguese Governor decoyed away all his Band of Musick except one who is discharged here. His Lordship made some attempts to get the Governor on Board his ship, but to no purpose, if he had succeeded he was resolved then to have brought him away if his Band had not immediately have been sent back.[13]

[10] Clive MS G37/box 32. [11] Clive MS G37/box 15/1.
[12] Clive MS G37/box 32; 7 Nov. 1764. [13] BL, OIOC, Henry Watson MS D759.

In the end, Clive failed to secure the return of any of the musicians except Schuman, who was of little use by himself. A document records his dismissal at the Cape of Good Hope, and Henry Strachey supposed that the musician would 'make the best of his way to Vauxhall'.[14] His wages were calculated to the nearest penny, and he was obliged to sign a receipt:

Mr Schuman was hired at the Rate of:	£100 a year
He received in London at several times:	£40—0—0
He received at Rio Janeiro by the hand of Mr Strachey:	£2—7—6
	£42—7—6
He was hired the 10th May and Discharged the 22^{d} December 1764:	
Which being 226 Days amounts to:	£62—
Deduct what has been paid him:	£42—7—6
Remains due to Mr Schuman:	£19—12—6
Cape of Good Hope 22 Dec 1764	
Receipt: 'in full for the Balance due to me for Wages, and all demands' signed Charles Friedrich Schuman.[15]	£19—12—6

Much has been written on the low social status of musicians in eighteenth-century England and their financial insecurity. It is very rare, however, to find direct documentary evidence of their own attitude to the vicissitudes of their situation. All the more interesting, then, is a remarkable letter, written by Schuman himself to Clive, enumerating his complaints, setting forth his demands, and indicating his intention to defect, if matters were not put right.

[n.d.] Ch^{s} Fred^{k} Schuman to Robert Clive

I hope youll excuse ye Liberty I take in writing to you, but am sorry to find ye Ill usage, I have Received on Board obliges me, for twould be Impossible for me in the Compass of this paper, to mention half ye articles, losses and Disapointments, which I have meet with, tho I believe tis' not your Lordshipes orders, as I have not Engaged myself to my Lady in such a Character, and as ye promises which she made me are quit different, to what I have found, and likewise on shoare at your Lordships house, usuage not becoming my Character, being under Command of people, who have not ye Knowledge, and Understanding, to know how to behave to me, which Intirely brings me to ye Resolution, to Acquaint your Lordship, that I cannot go any Farther—Without your Lordship pleases to give me in writing, what I am to depend upon, I was offerd by Mr Standley one Hundred pound p^{r} Year, I told my Lady I would not go for such a price, she asked me then what I wanted more, I told my Lady I was Informed that Mr Robison, had one Hundred and Forty pounds, p^{r} year, and that I thought I merited nothing less, my lady told me as your Lordship was determined to give no more, she would make good my Demands, which her word I relyd upon, I hope my Lady has acquainted your Lordship ye same, which if your Lordship agrees to and that I should go on Board again, I likewise demand to mess with Mr Herne and to depend upon what comes from your Lordships Table's. And to have nothing to do, with ships allowance, or to go in ye Galley to quarrell, and Fight for my Victualls, and as I have Received great Ill usuage, from ye Master, beg youll put me upon such a Footing, that they may have nothing to do or say

[14] Clive MS G37/box 7/17; Henry Strachey to Margaret Clive, 7 Jan. 1765.

[15] Clive MS G37/box 79.

> to me, as I shall behave so as to give them, no Reason; I would not have your Lordship think, I have been persuaded by any body in this town, or that any of my Comrades know anything of this undertaking, or that my mind is to stay here, I should have taken ye same Resolution, on any Land in the World, even had it been amongst ye greatest Barbarians in ye World, which would not be Equal to my sufferings on Board of Ship, and if that your Lordships Generosity agrees with all my Demands, hitherto mentioned, and I go on Board again, with your Lordship to Bengal, that is no more than to venture again to loose my health, and spoil and loose the rest of my Cloaths, and Character, and I hope your lordship will please to favour me with an answer, Directed to Mr Carlos.[16]

It was doubtless very ill-advised of Schuman to bring Lady Clive's name into the matter, but the essence of his complaint was that when he had refused to travel for the one hundred pounds offered on Clive's behalf by John Stanley, she had agreed to make up the difference with the higher paid musicians. Even though he was addressing the Governor directly, Schuman had the nerve to couch his terms as 'demands'. He implied that life on board Clive's ship had been so appalling an experience that he would have taken the same action anywhere in the world. It seems that the musicians had been obliged to take their chances with the ordinary sailors at meal times, and had enjoyed few privileges as personal servants of Clive. Life with savages would be greatly preferable!

Having herself been involved in the recruitment, Lady Clive wrote to her husband to console him:

Berkeley Square, 12 March 1765 Margaret Clive to Robert Clive

> So you could not keep your musicians; I should have wondered if you had after their tricks at Portsmouth. However I think their loss may be submitted to, and if you could but have contrived to have sent Robinson's harpsichord after him, you would have got rid of more than one plague; your ears would have been freed from an insupportable offence, and the chief performer would have then have liked the cabin below when there was no Groneman and no Harpsichord. If you entirely lose your musicians you will not have their expenses to answer and you may depend on it we shall take care of them if they venture to come to London . . .[17]

The affair rankled with Clive, and it seems to have been widely discussed in Anglo-Indian circles. John Walsh later wrote to him: 'Your musicians I have heard nothing of.'[18] The ferocity of Clive's reaction to the loss of his band highlights the extent to which professional musicians employed by the Company administration in India had a symbolic importance out of all proportion to their personal status. Clive treated them as menial servants, and, had he known of their intentions, he would have had no qualms about confining them on board. Yet the furore that followed their desertion illustrates that the dignity of his rank as governor was at stake.

[16] Clive MS G37/box 72.
[17] NLW, Aberystwyth, Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 35.
[18] Clive MS G37/box 34; 5 Apr. 1765.

Table 3. List of musicians residing in Calcutta in 1766[a]

Name	Year arrived	Occupation	Authority for residence
John Martin (England)	1763	Taylor and Musician	By encouragement of the Gentlemen in Calcutta
John Harnebolez (Hanover)	1764	Lord Clive Musician	none given
John Straussenberg (Germany)	1747	serv'd seven Governors of Bengal as a musician	none given
Thomas Walter (England)	1759	Teacher of the French Horn	Left the Ship at Madras with permission of Mr Pigot and the captain
John Flint (Denmark)	1762	Musician to Lord Clive	Left the ship with leave of Mr Vansittart
John Hedsted (Prussian)	1762	Musician to Lord Clive	Left the ship with leave of Mr Vansittart
John Dacour (German)	1761	Musician to Lord Clive	Lord Clive
Julien Duhamet D'Boissant (France)		Musician to Lord Clive	Lord Clive

[a] BL, OIOC, Clive MS G37/box 18/9.

When Clive arrived in Calcutta without musicians, a state of affairs which he clearly regarded as highly embarrassing, he immediately set about recruiting a band. The general growth in employment opportunities for European musicians overseas, which in Rio had been a factor in the loss of his band, now acted in his favour. There were already eight free-lance musicians in Calcutta, seven of whom were taken on. A document drawn up some time in late 1766 lists the European inhabitants of Calcutta (excluding the covenanted servants and the army); it provides interesting details of the background of the musicians upon whose services Clive now had no option but to rely (Table 3). The list records nationality, date of arrival, occupation, and authority for residence. The vast majority of residents had of course arrived since Plassey. As a group, the musicians reflect the general pattern of residence, with six of the eight having arrived since 1759 and only one, the faithful John, a long-term inhabitant of the city. The musicians had all arrived on English or Dutch ships from Europe, except for one who had disembarked from a 'country ship' from an unspecified eastern port. Some of the men recruited by Clive as replacements had served the previous Governor Vansittart. It is significant that none of these musi-

cians would have had any particular reason to hope for a position in Clive's service, since it would have been assumed that he would arrive with his own band. There was evidently at least the possibility of making an independent living in the city. 'By encouragement of the Gentlemen of Calcutta' is the telling phrase used of one of the musicians, who, however, had another occupation to fall back on. Just over one quarter of the inhabitants were of European origin, the others all coming from England, Wales, Scotland, or Ireland. It was a colourful mix with significant numbers from Germany, France, Sweden, and Holland. The musicians, not unexpectedly, form a markedly more cosmopolitan group than the population at large. The only real surprise is the absence of Italians. Why musicians of this nationality, so well established in London, should have been reluctant to travel to India is far from clear.

The wages paid to Clive's musicians in India are recorded in a document listing his expenses. Each one of the seven musicians received 80 rupees per month, an annual salary of £96.[19] There were further recruitments. In June 1766, eight musicians were paid, and in December of the same year ten. The yearly expenditure on the band's wages now stood at close to £1,000. The rate of £100 a year seems to have been about the going rate for the services of a professional musician in India. A man being considered for employment by Margaret Fowke asked for 100 rupees a month, a rate of £120 per annum. Salaries at this level equate closely with the £100 offered by Clive to each member of the band engaged in London in 1764. That Lady Clive felt it necessary to supplement the salaries of two of the musicians to £160 shows that not all musicians would work for the basic amount. The eventual salary range of this ensemble (£100 to £160) gives a fair idea of what was available to musicians willing to work in India, whose abilities and status (in European terms) ranged from the modest to the respectable. Colquhoun's well-known assessment in 1806 of the average earnings of musicians and actors at £200 thus seems about right, if perhaps slightly high, although it is worth remembering that there would be opportunities to augment the basic salary, if not from additional engagements, then at least from tips.[20]

A final vignette, once again demonstrating the symbolic significance that Clive attached to his musicians, occurred in 1766, shortly after his departure from Calcutta. His investigations of the bribes accepted by leading Company officials during several contests to determine who should succeed as Nawab of Bengal in the early 1760s had left much ill-feeling, especially amongst those who had lost their positions as a result of the purge.[21] Some had been publicly named and dismissed. It seems that a group of discontented individuals were planning to celebrate the departure of one of their number with a concert, and their representative wrote to ask the new Governor Verelst for permission to engage the musicians:

[19] NLW, Aberystwyth, Clive MS 354.

[20] S. McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 197.

[21] P. J. Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 158–79.

[Calcutta], 28 March 1766 Harry Verelst to Robert Clive

> On the day of your Lordship's departure I received a Note from Mess. Stephenson and Lambert requesting the Music for a Ball and supper they and some other Gentlemen intended to make Saturday. I assented to their Request. Yesterday morning I was informed by a message from a Mr Sumner that a Curious Invitation was going about town addressed to the Gentlemen and Ladies of Calcutta to a Ball and Supper made for a *certain Person* who was on his departure for Europe and desired I would take note of it. I immediately sent for Mr Stephenson and asked him whether such an invitation had been sent about. S. told me there had. I ask'd him whether that Certain Person was Mr Leycester who had been publickly censured . . . I forbad the Music and soon after received the enclos'd Chit from Messrs Stephenson and Lambert.[22]

Ralph Leycester was one of the officials dismissed by Clive.[23] Clive, understandably very touchy on the subject of musicians, replied thus:

29 March 1766 Robert Clive to Harry Verelst

> In Answer to your Favor of Yesterday's date, I cannot withhold my entire Approbation of your refusing the Music to the Gentlemen who ask'd for it. An Entertainment, in the manner, and at the time proposed by that Society, not only tended to the Encouragement of a Man publicly censured by the Committee, but in my Opinion, carried the Appearance of an Insolent Celebration of my Departure from the Presidency; and I doubt not but you will at all times, positively refuse the Musicians to any of those who have declined paying me that Deference and Respect which it was their Duty to pay me as Governor.[24]

Not only would the proposed entertainment, apparently to be sponsored on Leycester's behalf by the Society of Trade, amount to a pointed and public rejection of the verdict on his behaviour, but its timing would be certain to be seen as an attempt to humiliate Clive. To be subject to a musical snub at both ends of his governorship was too much, and Clive insisted that the band should remain a symbolic expression of Company policy. The importance attached to the governor's band is evident throughout the remainder of the eighteenth century, with a new band being recruited every time that a governor-general was appointed. A few months after the return of Warren Hastings to England in 1785, an urgent advertisement appeared in the London press, presumably relating to the requirements of the new governor: 'Wanted immediately, a complete Band of Musicians, to go to India'.[25]

French Horn Duos and Wind Bands

The first free-lance musicians to find employment in India in large numbers were horn players. Ever since the establishment of factories in the seventeenth century,

[22] BL, OIOC, MS F218/89. [23] Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes*, 237.
[24] BL, OIOC, Home Miscellaneous MS 739/19. [25] *Morning Post* [London], 23 Nov. 1785.

there had been periodic engagements for a range of wind players, 'noises' of trumpets, bands of cornets and sackbuts, and ensembles of oboes and bassoons.[26] The duties required were ceremonial ones of a conventional kind, leading processions, announcing the arrival of distinguished guests, and providing incidental music during commemorative feasts. There was a gradual extension of this kind of musical symbolism into the population at large. Just as the Company used ceremonial wind music to advertise its wealth and political power, so it became fashionable for individuals to express their status in musical sound. The least expensive way of doing this was to hire a pair of French horn players. These 'musicians' would normally double as ordinary servants, but would always be on hand to sound their instruments, most commonly during journeys. Before her voyage up the Ganges, Margaret Fowke, anxious not to appear deficient in this recognized piece of musical symbolism, expressed concern when she was unable to procure any horn duets, and discovered that the players she wanted were inland.[27]

The frequency with which pairs of horns appear in inventories of the 1760s and 1770s suggests that horn calls were a prominent part of the aural landscape in East India Company settlements. A small selection of entries is given in Appendix 2. French horns also appear frequently in contemporary newspaper advertisements, which add further details. It is quite clear, for example, that many of these horns were essentially simple, signalling instruments played by untrained servants. An advertisement on behalf of the music-seller Stone lists 'French Horns, *Concert and Common*'.[28] Some horn players were slaves or indentured servants: 'To be Sold: Two Coffre Boys, who play remarkably well on the French Horn, about 18 years of age; belonging to a Portuguese Paddrio lately deceased. For particulars enquire of the Vicar of the Portuguese Church.'[29] Such advertisements suggest that a market had developed in French horn players. Other examples include: Sold at auction, three boys 'two of whom play upon the French Horn';[30] 'Wanted: Two Coffries who can play upon the French horn';[31] 'Absconded—two Malay French-horn-men'.[32] Although many ordinary servants played the simple signal horn, others were undoubtedly professional musicians, who could perform more elaborate music. With their ancient outdoor associations, horn duets were inevitably part of tiger hunting. Sir John Day, writing to Sir William Jones, described one such occasion: 'While we dined, the French horns play'd marches, Hunting pieces descriptive of the Death of the Game, and other Slow movements—The Tigers still lying in front.'[33] Collectively, horn players form the first large-scale influx of independent European 'musicians' into eighteenth-century India. The entries from the Bengal Inventories exemplify the full range of ownership. Individuals in possession of a pair of horns when they died were not of course all players themselves: many owned instruments for their servants to play; some were merchants who stocked French horns to supply the market; others were professional musicians for whom

[26] Woodfield, *English Musicians in the Age of Exploration*, ch. 14.
[27] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E4, 294.
[28] *India Gazette*, 21 Feb. 1781.
[29] *India Gazette*, 24 Mar. 1781.
[30] *India Gazette*, 25 June 1782.
[31] *India Gazette*, 5 Oct. 1781.
[32] *India Gazette*, 23 Aug. 1784.
[33] Fowke MS E5, 77.

horn playing was perhaps no more than a sideline. It would have made excellent sense for any professional musician working in India to have had at least some basic fluency on the horn.

By the 1770s, pairs of horns were commonplace in Calcutta, a fact that doubtless induced the wealthy to go one step further and hire a complete wind band. Already in 1764, the lack of clarinet players in Clive's ill-fated band was a matter of comment, but it was not long before this new fashion in England was replicated in India. The appearance of growing numbers of oboes and clarinets in the Bengal Inventories is a clear sign of the trend towards full wind bands. By the 1780s, bands of clarinets, horns, and bassoons performed many of the public functions that they did in English society, playing at open-air entertainments. As in England, there was a strong association between music and race meetings.[34] The *India Gazette* reported the running of the Ladies Plate: 'Tea, coffee, a very elegant cold collation, in tents, and a band of wind instruments, was provided for the refreshment of the ladies and gentlemen.'[35] An example of an extremely wealthy individual, who seemingly employed his own wind band, was Captain John Horne:[36]

Ramsey's Song Book
Frisky Songster
A pair of French Horns
a Chamber Organ
a hand Organ
a Hautboy
a Clarinet
a Ditto
a Violin and a Case for two
5 Books of Musick for Clarinet and Bassoon
a Paper of Fiddle Strings
2 Bridges for a Violin
a Book of Musick for a French horn
a d° for a Clarinet
a d° for a Bassoon
2 d° for 1 and 2 French Horn
Some lose musick

The other type of employment open to wind bands was in the army, and the large increase in its size meant that by the 1790s Calcutta was fast becoming a very receptive market for manufacturers of wind instruments, one sign of which was the tendency to advertise the names of makers in the *Calcutta Gazette*:

23 August 1792	A pair of Concert Horns, in cases complete.
	Two Bassoons, with Reeds, Cases, etc complete.
	A pair of Clarinets, with ditto.
	Oliver's Military Pieces.
	Coleman's ditto.

[34] P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 122.
[35] *India Gazette*, 8 Dec. 1781. [36] BL, OIOC, Bengal Inventories, P155/1.

28 November 1793	From Gastor Italian Hautboys, with best Silver Keys. Best tipt Flutes, with Silver Keys. Clarinets, tipt and extra Keys. Bassoons
24 April 1794	One pair of Bassoons, compleat with Crooks in leather cases 300 One pair of Concert Clarinets, by Milhouse, in cases, compleat 120

Selling points for wind instruments were their 'completeness', with cases, crooks, reeds, spare joints, and, with an eye to the army market, their appearance, with emphasis on the use of silver keys.

Free-Lance Players

Other kinds of free-lance musicians, who began to arrive in Calcutta in increasing numbers in the late eighteenth century, had to struggle very hard to survive. Few were on what Rohr has termed the 'high-status career track'; the majority would be better termed 'mere' fiddlers, whose motivations in coming to India were financial.[37] The problem that faced such individuals was not that there was no work of any kind, but that in order to attain even moderately prosperous circumstances over a period of time, it was necessary to establish a reputation. Even in the most advantageous situations in provincial England, there was a belief that status could best be established through appearances on the public concert platform. Subscription concert series were not likely to bring in large sums of money themselves, and indeed they were often run at a loss, but they were of considerable significance because musicians who ran them successfully could gain access more easily to lucrative fields of private employment in the society concert, the domestic soirée, and the music lesson. The competition for public recognition could thus be fierce, as in the case of Thomas Linley and William Herschel in Bath.[38] Newspapers were published in India on a regular basis after 1780, and they provide information of a conventional kind, familiar to any student of eighteenth-century English musical life, on the struggle to promote successful concert series: requests for subscriptions; announcements of concerts; unavoidable postponements; and programme details. Couched in formal language, courteous in tone, the newspaper reportage portrays a 'polite' world in which success is 'gratifying' and disappointment 'regrettable'. Behind the scenes, however, things were very different. The Fowke letters, especially during 1783 and 1784, provide valuable insights into the difficulties faced by professional musicians in their attempts to achieve public success and then translate it into a lucrative private career. This is candid eyewitness evidence of a kind so often lacking in accounts of provincial music-making in England.

[37] D. Rohr, 'A Profession of Artisans: The Careers and Social Status of British Musicians, 1750–1850', Ph.D. thesis (University of Pennsylvania, 1983), 30.

[38] I. Woodfield, *The Celebrated Quarrel between Thomas Linley (Senior) and William Herschel: An Episode in the Musical Life of 18th century Bath* (Bath: University of Bath, 1977).

The leading professional musician in Calcutta during the 1783 season was a violinist named MacArthur, the 'wary Mac', as he was described by Joseph Fowke.[39] Devious and stubborn, he was a good match for Margaret Fowke, who could be obstinate enough herself. MacArthur attached himself like a limpet to the Fowkes. In addition to giving lessons, he in effect acted as their musical adviser, an unofficial position, but one that afforded opportunities for making a bit extra. Like most musicians in Calcutta, he had a sideline in the retail trade, buying and selling instruments whenever he could, and he was hoping to persuade the family to replace some of their musical instruments. His technique was to make snide remarks about Margaret's pianoforte in the (vain) hope of receiving a commission to replace it:

Calcutta, 12 July 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> I had an offer some time ago of a Piano-forte for 300 rupees a very good one and in perfect order. It was Jack Auriol who informed me of it—it had been Stanley's. I had at first some thoughts of taking it, and countermanding the one I have sent for from England. But I gave it up, for I am perfectly well satisfied with the one I have, which tho' McArthur runs it down, has a very pleasing if not fine tone.[40]

Three months later, he was still hoping. He had been asked by Margaret to 'look out' for a pianoforte (no fee payable), but had not been given a 'commission' to find one (fee payable):

Near Baglepoor, 12 October 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> My father writes me word that McArthur has got a very fine piano-forte for me. I did not leave the commission with him, but desired him some time ago to assist in looking out for me. I am however rather inclined to take it, as I cannot always keep the one I have without some embarrassment. If however you are not of my opinion you can easily write to McArthur and tell him that you hear he has taken a piano-forte for me which I shall not want, as you have written home for one. It will be no loss to him, for I know many people in Calcutta who want piano-fortes.[41]

Tuning and keyboard maintenance were useful if uninspiring sidelines; the work was at least regular because of the ravages of the climate. In cases of more serious damage, a resident musician like MacArthur would also be expected to know how to repair an instrument. The full range of services which the Fowkes required of their professional musician thus included organizing private concerts, giving lessons, hiring additional musicians, buying and selling instruments, tuning, effecting repairs, ensuring a steady supply of replacement strings and other accessories, buying and copying music. It is little wonder that to maintain an active amateur musical household in the climate of India was an expensive business. This seems to have struck Margaret Fowke with some force:

How therefore am I to manage? I asked Lady Day what a small family like ours, with a moderate number of servants, a carriage, and seeing company occasionally ought with a pretty strict economy to spend a month. She told me 2000 Rupees [about £200]. Considering that

[39] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E6B, 88. [40] Fowke MS E4, 202. [41] Fowke MS E4, 494.

Lady Day never took musical charges with the list, and which yet with books, strings, Oamae and the Mac's attendance upon both of us encreased the account a good deal, it will not be very surprising that our expenses s^{d} have exceeded that large sum so much as they did.[42]

Musical expenses are here seen as additional to the monthly running costs of an establishment, but it is clear that they were considerable.

For the professional musician, obliged to make his way in Calcutta without the security of a regular Company salary, private work provided a vital source of income, but it was an uncertain one. As a result of the cyclical nature of Anglo-Indian society, supply and demand were often out of step. Sometimes there were too many free-lance musicians competing for the relatively few lucrative private situations, while at others, there were temporary shortages.

No reason is given in the Fowke letters for MacArthur's decision towards the end of 1783 to leave India, but there are indications that the musician may have been in financial trouble. Illness, a major factor in the careers of musicians in Calcutta, since a situation lost during a period of incapacity might never be regained, was the probable cause. Joseph Fowke wrote: 'McArthur is not yet upon his legs and he shifts his place of abode so often that it wou'd be difficult to find him.'[43] Failure to keep up payments on successive lodgings is sometimes evidence of a musician living close to the edge of financial insolvency. The insecurity facing the professional musician in Calcutta, even one who had achieved temporary dominance through a public success, was made much worse by the knowledge that the next ship might bring competitors, who, by virtue of novelty value or superior accomplishment, might deprive him overnight of the most lucrative engagements. MacArthur did his best to hide his shortcomings, but he was unable to fool the Fowkes. Writing of one of the lesser Portuguese violinists named Vincent, Joseph commented: 'McArthur knew him well and how to make use of him to set off his own play, for he used to make him play Note for Note with him whenever he was in a difficulty, or rather when he coud not play the notes at all; and this the wary Mac wou'd call setting him to a Ripieno.'[44]

The departure of MacArthur at the end of 1783 left the way open for one of his erstwhile rivals to establish a position as the settlement's leading musician. The two contenders, Diehle and Oehme, had both on occasion substituted for MacArthur in the Fowke household. Diehle was first to make his pitch, inserting a carefully timed advertisement in the *India Gazette* of 24 January 1784:

Mr Diehle Begs leave to acquaint the Ladies and gentlemen, that he tunes and repairs all sorts of musical instruments, and teaches on the violin, violincello, clarinet, French horn, and bassoon, and has for sale, violin, violincello and guitar strings . . . N.B. Harpsichord and piano fortes tuned, either by the month or day.

Behind the scenes, a struggle was taking place between the two musicians over who should run the next concert series. There was no possibility of setting up rival subscriptions as sometimes happened in leading provincial centres in England such as

42 Fowke MS E4, 155. 43 Fowke MS E4, 431. 44 Fowke MS E6B, 88.

Bath. As we shall see, Calcutta, measured by its European population, was still a small town, and it was hard enough to keep one subscription going.

It was usual for public concert series to take place under the auspices of one of the leading ladies in the settlement. Each man had already enlisted his patron; Diehle, thanks to the intervention of Joseph Fowke, had the support of Mrs Wheler, Oehme of Lady Chambers. A dispute seemed inevitable, particularly given Joseph Fowke's reputation for engaging in petty quarrels, but matters were resolved amicably:

Calcutta, 20 March 1784 Lady Chambers to Margaret Fowke

> Your Father was all the morning here yesterday and (tho' I promised to keep it a Secret) he dined with us. He came to quarrel with me, but I will never be drawn into party disputes—so I believe we shall settle the matter amicably—tis all about a Concert. Oehme was cheated *last year* and I promised him any help this season. Your father however has engaged Mrs Wheler in favour of Diehle. I could get a large subscription for Oehme but I hope to persuade him to give up half to Diehle rather than have the appearance of leading a Cabul which I have avoided with so much care these ten years. The old Gentleman went away in very good humour, I have sent Oehme to Mrs Wheler that she may settle the matter as she chuses. I stopt Fowkes anger by telling him that I should be happy to put my name to anything he proposed in favour of Mr Diehle and that I expected my friends to excuse my wishes in favour of O. as he married Polly who by the bye is already a mother.[45]

Lady Chambers may have exaggerated the ease with which she could get a large subscription for the concerts, for it was not until June that the first performance took place. Another reason for the delay was that Calcutta was at a low ebb; musicians were leaving the city in numbers sufficient to hinder the recruitment of an adequate band.[46] At the end of May, Margaret had written to her father from Benares asking him to hire a 'tenor' (viola player) for her, which, if successful, would have enabled her to continue to perform fashionable concertos 'a quattro'. But the consequences for Calcutta would have been grim. Joseph stated explicitly that Diehle's concerts depended entirely on the one suitable Portuguese string player remaining in Calcutta:

Calcutta, n.d. [June 1784] Joseph Fowke to Margaret Fowke

> I have not forgot your former commission for a Musician. Of the Portuguese Musicians there is only one fit for your purpose, who is Vincent and he leads the public Concert. If I shou'd draw him away Poor Diehle wou'd starve, and the Town might perhaps be offended with you and me too.[47]

The subscription series began in June, the first concert being held in the London Tavern, the second in the Old Court House. An advertisement notifying subscribers of the change was placed under the name of Diehle alone.[48] A compromise had clearly been agreed though, since Lady Chambers (Oehme's patron) recorded in her

[45] Fowke MS E5, 21. [46] Fowke MS E5, 12. [47] Fowke MS E5, 34.
[48] *India Gazette*, 29 June 1784.

almanac her attendance at the first five concerts and her participation on several occasions.[49]

The Fowke correspondence from late August 1784 includes letters which give a very different perspective on the fortunes of the concert series then in progress. To Calcutta society, the subscription appeared a success. Many people were attending, and the new fashions were on display:

[Calcutta], 30 August 1784 Sophia Plowden to Margaret Fowke

> Your friend Lady C. seems to take the lead in fashion and everything else, she has sat up with two or three of the new arrivals, danced at 12 o'clock at noon at the drawing of the Lottery, sings at the Concert, frequents plays, Europe shops etc. etc. and is in short the gayest Belle in Calcutta.[50]

Sooksagur, 2 September [1784] Mrs Wheler to Margaret Fowke

> I suppose you have heard of the Concert this season, patronised by Lady Chambers and myself, for the Benefit of Aimy [Oehme] and Dhiele. It is held at the Court House, and quite the fashion to frequent it, and at the two last meetings there were so many new faces both male and female that I cou'd not help fancying that my Air Baloon Hat had insensibly convey'd me to a distant Country: every thing now is à l'air Baloon, you must have air Baloon Petticoats, air Baloon hats, air Baloon Caps.[51]

Joseph Fowke, however, had a more sympathetic understanding of the difficult plight of the professional musician. He could clearly see that the whole enterprise was about to collapse:

Calcutta, 6 September 1784 Joseph Fowke to Margaret Fowke

> I have not touched a fiddle nor had a guest in my house these five months; I can spend my small income without festivals or musical entertainments and for the latter I confess I have little relish left, so you may be assured my amusements, do not stand in the way of yours. But the Fact is poor Dihle has the greatest difficulty in the world, even with the Danes, to make out a Concert, by which he and many poor musicians are kept from starving . . . People have grown so very tired of Calcutta that there is hardly a fixed Resident in it.[52]

This is not the only occasion when Joseph Fowke, possibly overstating the situation somewhat, indicates that the concert was all that lay between the musicians of Calcutta and starvation. At this point, newspaper advertisements for the subscription series cease abruptly. Joseph, conceding the current financial difficulties in Calcutta, was nonetheless very critical of its treatment of the Portuguese musicians who were now on the point of leaving:

Calcutta, 4 September 1784 Joseph Fowke to Margaret Fowke

> Vincent and Emanuel intend returning to Goa from whence they came, for want of proper encouragement. Poverty may be an excuse for the Town at present, but in its

[49] BL, OIOC, Chambers MS A172. [50] Fowke MS E5, 44.
[51] Fowke MS E5, 40. [52] Fowke MS E5, 43.

> more prosperous days it was distinguished, in my opinion, more for its prodigality than its generosity. I am told Vincent is gone to Malda for his health, and that he intends returning to Calcutta before he sets off for Goa; If he holds his resolution of leaving us I will endeavour to engage him for Buhnares at 200 S[icca] R[upees] p[er] month and his board. Emanuel is gone up the Country somewhere. I had no notice given me of the departure of either. Their places are supplied for the present by a Sett of Danes who are infinitely inferiour to both. One of these plays decently upon a small harp placed upon a Table, and another upon an instrument called the Clarinet D'Amor. The first falls much short of the great harp, and the last is a coarse instrument. They had novelty however to recommend them, and the musical people heard them with rapture.[53]

The failure of the subscription series and the subsequent departure of a number of musicians had immediate consequences for amateur music-making. Joseph Fowke with his interests in the 'ancient' string repertoire was adversely affected, and he could now find no professional string players to accompany him:

Calcutta, 15 November 1784 Joseph Fowke to Margaret Fowke

> I count it a great misfortune that no second remains in the place to accompany me, and I don't know whether my favourite Tenor Emanuel will have any encouragement to stay, tho' he shou'd incline at my intreaty, to change his Resolution of removing to Goa. If Vincent should not return to us from Malda where he is at present I can enjoy no Music in parts.[54]

For the professionals, the premature close of the concert season was an obvious blow. They had to resort to augmenting their teaching income in any way that they could. Three letters from Joseph to his son Francis in Benares about some poor-quality violin strings with which he had been supplied appear to show Diehle and the remaining Portuguese musicians scrambling to sell off anything they could to keep solvent:

Calcutta, 16 December 1784 Joseph Fowke to Francis Fowke

> I have received your letter of 6 December accompanying the strings sent you by Dihle. It is in vain to attempt getting any satisfaction from any of these people. I must however tell you that good fiddle strings are almost as hard to be got in England as in Calcutta; and I am afraid, when good, they will soon spoil here. McArthur used to supply me with plenty of bad strings.[55]

Having checked the quality of the strings supplied by Diehle, Joseph was at first inclined to lay the blame on him:

Calcutta, 18 December 1784 Joseph Fowke to Francis Fowke

> I have looked over Dihle's strings which, excepting the 3[ds] are as good as you commonly meet with out of the Europe Ships. Most of the Chinese Strings provided for me on Commission were brown as yours are; a very few were white and clear, but I don't think them truer than the Rest. The Silver Strings if they stand are good. I don't mean

[53] Fowke MS E5, 50. [54] Fowke MS E5, 53. [55] Fowke MS E6A, 31.

> however to vindicate Dihle, who is an idle, careless, thoughtless fellow and must infallibly end his life in a jail or run away. It is impossible to serve so improvident a wretch. We are not likely ever to have any more music in Calcutta. The musicians are idle fellows, and if they were otherwise, the Inhabitants are too mean or too poor to give them reasonable encouragement.[56]

After further investigation, Joseph found that Diehle had merely passed off a consignment of poor-quality strings to one of the Portuguese violinists, who, in turn, had supplied them to Francis. He appears remarkably understanding of the reasons for this, and upbraids his son, apparently for not having paid the musician:

[Calcutta], 22 December 1784 Joseph Fowke to Francis Fowke

> I have enquired into your Complaint of Dihle. He is perfectly innocent of the Charge. De Souza bo^{r}t many strings of Dihle for sale and yours among the rest, but Dihle was entirely ignorant on whose account they were purchased and as for De Souza who plays as rough as a bear I question if he knows a smooth tone from a rough one. But to expect honor from any of these low people is folly. It is necessary by Caution or Terror to guard against their Impositions. Hunger and Poverty are sad enemies to Morality. Allow me however to be frank. Your neglecting to pay the labourer his hire is a more blameable action than De Souza's endeavouring to put off some of his perishable fiddle strings—You have no temptation to a bad action, the Portuguese might have had a very strong one.[57]

It is very clear that Diehle was in serious financial trouble, and some time later, he took a course of action that, at one time or another, most musicians in Calcutta had to do: he resorted to non-musical employment. Joseph reported that 'poor Diehle', 'whom I lately assisted in an hour of distress', was now a searcher in the Customs House.[58] To add to the problems caused by the flop of the public subscription series, the private series, which, as in England, ran in alternation with it, was devoted entirely to vocal music. This would have been a further disappointment for the musicians; glees and songs needed little in the way of professional assistance.

In the autumn, there was the usual influx of new musicians, who for the moment at least had the glamour of novelty. Joseph Fowke, however, was unimpressed. He wrote scathingly of the new arrivals, commenting that a group of Danes 'have diverted the Town with a parcel of infamous Clarinets worse to my Ear than the grunting of Hogs'.[59] At least he was now able to start up his own musical soirées again with the help of another violinist:

Calcutta, 6 March 1785 Joseph Fowke to Margaret Fowke

> I have lately made some musical Entertainments in compliment to those who have opened their houses to me . . . Capt^{n} Kid, who takes a lead in my concerts is a very fine genius much vitiated by the abominable taste of the times, notwithstanding which I prefer his play to Mr Mea, but take them at all points they are still far short of MacArthur, base as he was in many instances.[60]

56 Fowke MS E6A, 32. 57 Fowke MS E6A, 34. 58 Fowke MS E6A, 80.
59 Fowke MS E5, 53. 60 Fowke MS E5, 75.

The rapidity of the turnover in musicians presenting themselves on the public stage is characteristic of Calcutta at this period. A hearing was almost guaranteed new arrivals; what was far harder was to make a living from music for any length of time.

Early in 1785, there was again a conflict over who should run the subscription concerts. The first to advertise were Ladd and Stone, who announced that the opening concert in a new series would take place in the Old Court House the following day.[61] Ladd, if the Fowkes are to be believed, was an indifferent performer; only if they had no alternative did they employ him. Stone had just set up a music business:

Mr Stone begs leave to inform the Public, that he has opened a Music Warehouse at his house . . . where he has for sale a large and valuable collection of music, *both ancient and modern.* A catalogue of which may be had by applying to him as above.

Also the following instruments, viz. Violins, tenors, Violoncellos, *Piano Forte*, Guittars, German Flutes by Potter, *Florios and Plain*, French Horns, *concert and common*, Bugle Horns, trumpets, Hautboys. Clarinets, Fifes etc. Violin and other strings in highest preservation.

N. B. Music copied and Music arranged and bound, and instruments of every kind repaired in the best and neatest manner.[62]

If Stone was attempting to further his cause by joining forces with an established musician, he quickly discovered that he had picked the wrong man. An alternative subscription was soon proposed. Oehme presented his respectful compliments to those who had honoured his plan with their 'countenance and support', and announced his first concert in the Harmonic Tavern, on the same day that Stone and Ladd were due to hold their second in the Old Court House.[63] In subsequent weeks Oehme continued to advertise heavily, but nothing more was heard of the rival series, which presumably folded rapidly, if it ever started.

It was not long, however, before Oehme's series began to run into problems. A notice in the *Calcutta Gazette* on 19 May, while politely phrased, suggests in fairly plain terms that Oehme felt he was being cheated:

As Mr Oehme finds the rules concerning his Concert are not generally understood in the Settlement, he takes this method to prevent any further mistakes. Seven ladies, scholars of Mr Oehme, have each a separate list; and upon one or other of those lists the name of every subscriber is entered. The subscription 80 S[icca]. Rupees; and the Ladies of the families of subscribers invited by tickets, with their names upon them; but neither these nor subscribers tickets are transferable. Any Lady may, by entering her name in one of the lists, become a subscriber for any number of visiting tickets at 100 Sic. Rupees each; and such visiting tickets, having the subscribing Lady's name on them, become transferable either to a Lady or a Gentleman.

Less expensive, non-transferable subscription tickets were being used as transferable tickets. Three months later comes the first in a series of retrenchments. Oehme advertised for a new series, but monthly instead of fortnightly.[64] As an additional

[61] *India Gazette*, 28 Mar. 1785.
[62] *India Gazette*, 21 Feb. 1785.
[63] *Calcutta Gazette*, 31 Mar. 1785.
[64] *Calcutta Gazette*, 25 Aug. 1785.

inducement, music was to be provided for country dances after the concert. After only two of these concerts, Oehme inserted a notice of a change of address, which almost implies that he had had to resort to pitching a tent: 'Mr Oehme being removed, lives at present in a garden next to Mr Charles Weston's.'[65] By February 1786, his circumstances were still unsettled. He had moved yet again and was now advertising instruments for sale at his new address, including 'a Harpsichord, some Forte Pianos, and Forte Piano Guittars'. In a bid to keep going, Oehme inserted a notice pleading for support for a new (or rather continued) concert subscription: those who had subscribed 100 rupees at the beginning were not meant to pay again, but, 'wishing to continue the concerts through the year, as intended, and finding himself rather limited', he expressed the hope that those who had not subscribed would have no objection to paying 50 sicca rupees, rather than turn up as visitors.[66] This was money wasted, for the doomed subscription collapsed. It seems clear that no amount of ingenuity and perseverance on the part of the musicians could make a subscription series pay during the difficult middle years of this decade.

Oehme started to look for other work. He took up a position as musical director at the Vauxhall Gardens. An advertisement refers to 'Musick *Champetre*' playing in different parts of the garden and a concert 'directed by Mr Ohme'.[67] It is by no means certain that the beleaguered musician received his money. One month later a notice appeared, stating that if the organizer of the Vauxhall performance did not soon receive payment of the debts owed to him, he would be forced to leave Calcutta a ruined man.[68]

After the failure of Oehme's subscription, it was left to a newly arrived musical entrepreneur to try again. Mr Mann from Longman & Broderip arrived in Calcutta to set up a music shop. Stone, meanwhile, although still retailing music, had wisely diversified into liquor, an absolutely certain money-spinner in Calcutta. (Payments to him 'for mending a guitar' and 'for exchange of musical instruments' in the accounts of Henry Vansittart in 1788 demonstrate his continuing interests in music retail.)[69] Mann's advertisement stresses the range of services offered, but he could also play upon his experience and past association with an important London firm:

> Mr G. C. Mann (just arrived from Messrs Longman and Broderip's at their Music Warehouses No. 26 Cheapside, and No. 13 Haymarket london) takes this method of acquainting the L. and G. of the settlement, that he, together with Mr Russell, have opened a Music Shop in Loll Bazar, facing the Old Harmonic; where they repair and hire all kinds of Musical Instruments with the greatest care and expedition, Mr Mann having presided over that business for Longman and Broderip.
>
> Mr Mann teaches the Harpsichord and Violin on the most approved method and on reasonable terms; accompanies Ladies with the Violin; and, if required, will take that Instrument in either private or publick concerts.

[65] *Calcutta Gazette*, 10 Nov. 1785. [66] *Calcutta Gazette*, 30 Mar. 1786.
[67] *India Gazette*, 4 Dec. 1786. [68] *India Gazette*, 22 Jan. 1787.
[69] BL, OIOC, Bengal Inventories, L/AG/34/27/10, vol. 2.

N.B. They having received a great quantity of instruments, viz. Harpsichords, Piano Fortes, Organs, both finger and barrel, and New Music, being part of the Investment of the Juliana Maria.

Harpsichord, Piano Fortes, etc tuned by the month, or time.[70]

The advertisement concluded by floating the idea of a concert subscription: Mann and Russell 'mean to carry on the Subscription Concerts'. There is no indication, however, that their plan even got off the ground.

From 1787, there are clear signs that an established pattern of 'public' concert-giving was on the verge of taking root. The *India Gazette* published a new proposal by Carter and Trinks.[71] The notice stated that the two 'have been encouraged to propose themselves for conducting a Concert at the Old Court House, where a convenient Orchestra has been constructed'. The concerts were to take place fortnightly, except during the hot months of May, June, September, and October. For the first time, editorial newspaper comment openly supported the venture: 'It is with much pleasure we observe this truly agreeable amusement so well attended, and so liberally patronised. The merits of the Gentlemen who conduct it are unquestioned, and they can never fail to produce the highest gratification to every lover of harmony. The song which concluded the last evening's entertainment was a pleasing proof of Mr Carter's taste and execution.'[72] A month later: 'This agreeable amusement was . . . attended as usual by a very genteel audience. The Band was superintended and conducted by several musical Gentlemen who have often given their assistance to the entertainment and pleasure of their friends.'[73]

The year 1789 marked a high point in the development of the public concert in Calcutta. To coincide with the publication of his *Oriental Miscellany*, William Hamilton Bird took on the direction of a subscription series. The first concert was 'attended by a very numerous and genteel Company', and the second was also reported to have been 'numerously attended'. For the first time, programmes for a subscription series were printed systematically and in full in the press. There is little doubt that an orchestra of some size had been recruited, as Haydn symphonies were regularly performed. In its scale and range, Bird's series matched closely what was on offer in many of the provincial towns of England, and there is a clear sense that, coming after Carter's success, some critical threshold of viability was in the process of being passed. But it was not to be. It soon became apparent that musicians were still having great difficulty in sustaining a public concert season of any depth. Bird advertised for a second series of six concerts, to be held later that year, yet interest was apparently waning, and he was forced into a retreat, now proposing a series in which the formal musical element was notably downgraded: concert of one act; ball; cold collation; cards; chess tables.[74] Later that year, there was a further retrenchment. Evidently sensing financial risk and wishing to spread it, Bird now advertised the series with two partners, Miller and Lebedeff.[75] In subsequent years, proposals for

70 *Calcutta Gazette*, 27 July 1780.
71 *India Gazette*, 1 Jan. 1787.
72 *India Gazette*, 19 Feb. 1787.
73 *India Gazette*, 19 Mar. 1787.
74 *Calcutta Gazette*, 14 May and 17 Sep. 1789.
75 *Calcutta Gazette*, 19 Nov. 1789.

subscription series from would-be entrepreneurs appear from time to time, but there is very little evidence to suggest that a full-scale regular season of public concerts flourished in Calcutta at any time during the 1790s.

In their struggle to establish a regular subscription concert series in Calcutta, professional musicians were attempting to benefit from a pattern of urban musical life, long since established in English towns. Borsay suggests that by the 1730s, eight or nine regional centres were experimenting with public concert series, and by the 1760s a further dozen or so. To this should be added the fast proliferating musical societies, often 'private' organizations in name only and open to all respectable music lovers.[76] Even though the overall impression is of the essential uniformity of provincial musical culture in England, and especially of its social basis as the musical expression of the 'pursuit of status', embracing elegant houses, immaculate gardens, fine clothing, and the purchase of works of art, individual traditions grew out of pre-existing musical practices, and were influenced by local factors, often in subtle ways. Geographical and political contexts were important. On the one hand, there were major regional centres, past and future capitals of nations (Edinburgh and Dublin); on the other, there were cathedral cities (Salisbury and Winchester), university towns (Oxford and Cambridge), spas (Bath and Tunbridge Wells), and ports (Bristol and Liverpool). For some centres, geographical isolation was a factor (Aberdeen), and for others, the existence of well-established axes of travel between peripheral regions (Belfast). Calcutta's situation was unique. It was geographically remote, yet, owing to its colonial situation, music had a formal role, which had developed to the point at which Clive regarded his band as a direct agent of Company policy. It could certainly be argued that the emergence, however insubstantially, of a tradition of public subscription concert series marked the transition in Calcutta's status from an East India Company settlement under the direct control of a governor to an independent city, with its own urban culture and civic identity.

There are several reasons why the public concert failed to flourish in Calcutta. The most important of these are economic. In the final analysis, the viability of any commercial concert series depended on audience size. Late eighteenth-century Calcutta had a European population, probably in the range of two to three thousand. Comparison with English towns, which supported public concerts successfully, is instructive. In the mid-eighteenth century, Edinburgh (including Leith) had a population of 55,000, rising by the early nineteenth century to 82,000; Bath's population of 2,000 in 1700 had more than quadrupled by the mid-century; in the census of 1801, Oxford had 11,000 inhabitants.[77] All three towns supported at least one regular subscription series or musical society run on subscription principles. Despite its strategic and commercial significance, Calcutta was simply not in this league, its European population placing it in the band of forty to fifty English towns with an estimated population of between two and five thousand. Even in rural market towns

[76] Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance*, app. 4, 332–5.

[77] J. Burchell, *Polite or Commercial Concerts? Concert Management and Orchestral Repertoire in Edinburgh, Bath, Oxford, Manchester and Newcastle, 1730–1799* (New York and London: Garland, 1996), 9, 13, 15.

some public concerts were promoted, but they were usually small in scale and infrequent in occurrence—special occasions, rather than part of regular social life. Calcutta faced a problem; there was a real desire that as an important colonial centre, the city should be able to point to more than this low level of civic musical activity, but the European population was at a level below which such a programme was economically feasible. Overall population, however, was not necessarily the determining factor in the viability of commercial concerts. The precondition for success was whether there was sufficient interest among the more affluent citizens to fill a subscription list. Bath, with its great annual influx of wealthy visitors with time to fill, provided an ideal situation for musical entrepreneurs, and the town could sustain a richer concert life than its basic size might otherwise have permitted. In his account of the growth of an urban culture in eighteenth-century England, Borsay identifies as its social basis the landed gentry, who provided a 'solid foundation', and the expanding middle ranks, who were the 'dynamic and decisive force' behind it. The predominant tone of his account is of steady, organic growth over a long period, with a steady formalization and enrichment of a public musical culture. By contrast, Calcutta was from the start an unusually artificial urban creation, and, more significantly, its post-Plassey development took place at a frenetic pace. The absence of the landed gentry, but the presence of those in the commercial and military classes who were in India to pursue this desirable status, is what lent such force to the commercial markets for fine goods. Any professional musician looking through the pages of the *Calcutta Gazette* during the 1780s, and seeing the evidence of the flourishing retail market for musical instruments and the inflated prices being asked for them, must have felt the chances of success good. Prominent socialites, keen to establish their credentials as patrons of music, were readily available to head subscription lists, and this shared interest ensured a high number of attempts by musicians. Yet the impression remains that the economics of a fully-fledged urban musical culture simply did not yet add up in Calcutta.

Although the evidence is limited, there are grounds for believing that the musicians themselves regarded one hundred subscribers as the minimum necessary to achieve a reasonable profit. On one occasion Bird announced that he would continue with a concert series, even though he had not reached his target of 100 subscribers; on another, he reported that he would be 'a certain loser', with only sixty-nine subscribers.[78] For his next venture, involving more than just music and therefore incurring higher expenditure, he was looking for 150 subscribers. Taking 100 as an attainable if perhaps optimistic target for an economically viable subscription list, a musical entrepreneur in Calcutta would have needed to persuade one in every twenty or thirty European inhabitants to sign up, a higher level than would have been needed in any of the British towns mentioned earlier. Yet not all the residents of Calcutta would have been welcome. Although advertised in the press as public events, social exclusivity was an issue, as shown by Oehme's use of the ladies' list system.[79]

[78] *Calcutta Gazette*, June and July 1789.

[79] McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 19.

Although he is not the most reliable of witnesses, William Hickey gives one useful piece of information about Carter's subscription series—its financial outcome:

He soon informed me the object of his coming to India was to teach music and singing, in consequence of which I spoke to all the ladies of my acquaintance in his behalf, and although I did not find any of them disposed to put themselves under his tuition, one and all declared their readiness to promote his success. Some of the fair ones recommended his establishing a subscription concert, which they would patronise. This scheme meeting his approbation was adopted, and answered so completely that he cleared upwards of fifteen hundred sicca rupees, which set the little fellow quite agog and half mad with joy at his wonderful success.[80]

By any standards, a profit of 1,500 sicca rupees (£187. 10*s.* 0*d.*) on the series as a whole would have been counted a notable success. The season consisted of perhaps ten concerts—the initial announcement implied a series of twelve, while nine were individually advertised. A rank-and-file player in the band, in receipt of a fee of a guinea per performance, would gain a mere ten guineas from the season. The musical entrepreneur stood to gain much more, but also risked losing large sums. The viability of the entire undertaking depended critically on the number of subscribers. At 150 sicca rupees per subscription, the difference between a handsome profit and the break-even point was, if Hickey is to be believed, a mere ten subscribers. It is little wonder that the Calcutta newspapers so often published follow-up calls for additional subscribers, implying clearly that the minimum level of financial viability had yet to be attained. Moreover, it was of little use merely having names on a list, if subscribers were reluctant to pay up. Polite but anguished notices concerning late payments, or complaining about rule-breaking, are a sign of persistent trouble. Nonetheless, with average earnings for musicians in India at about £100 to £150, it is easy to see why so many believed the subscription concert offered the best chance of enhancing their basic income.

One explanation for the frequent failure of calls for subscriptions is that musical entrepreneurs simply priced themselves out of the market. Subscriptions for English provincial series ran at between one and three guineas, sometimes with a small additional charge of a shilling or so for admission to individual concerts.[81] By comparison, the cost of proposed subscriptions in Calcutta, which ran from 80 sicca rupees (£10) to 100 sicca rupees (£12. 10*s.* 0*d.*), or even 150 sicca rupees (£18. 15*s.* 0*d.*) seem excessively high. Even in London, five guineas was the norm.[82] The English pattern was for lower subscriptions with larger audiences. Robins cites three Chichester subscriptions of 152, 128, and 163, and an Oxford subscription of only 110 led to the return of the subscribers' money.[83] With higher subscription rates, musical entrepreneurs could go ahead with a smaller list, but this policy evidently failed more often than it succeeded.

The collapse in support for subscription concerts becomes very evident after

[80] *Memoirs of William Hickey*, ed. A. Spencer (London, 1914–25), iii. 289.

[81] Burchell, *Polite or Commercial Concerts?*, 193.

[82] McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 13.

[83] Burchell, *Polite or Commercial Concerts?*, 194.

1789. Bird, who had just run a twelve-concert series, had to lower his sights considerably and resort to a one-act concert series, in which the music was merely a preamble to the evening's 'entertainment'. It is a rather surprising coincidence that in the same year, several well-established British societies began to run into trouble. There are signs in the Oxford press in 1789 of the growing difficulty of filling a subscription list, and during the early 1790s its Music Society struggled. Even more baffling is the case of Edinburgh, which from its size and regional status ought to have been able to sustain its society without difficulty. It too began to struggle in 1789, and, just as in Calcutta, the response was to promote the society as a 'place of fashionable amusement', complete with tea room. No secret was made of the fact that this action was designed to attract more ladies.[84] The difficulties that some provincial societies began to encounter around 1790 seem to be part of a wider decline, evident even in London after the mid-1790s. McVeigh points to an economic downturn, with poor harvests, the war with France, a growing reaction against the frivolous and fashionable life-style, and, after the final departure of Haydn, the coming to an end of a natural musical cycle.[85] In the cases of Calcutta and Edinburgh, however, another possibly more significant factor was the growing perception that the hitherto successful subscription concert principle was itself no longer finding automatic favour. With the growing popularity of fashionable private concerts, a sharp clash of values seems to have developed between the traditional supporters of music societies, male amateur violinists, lovers of the 'ancient' string music of Corelli and Handel, and the growing numbers of active women musicians. It was not merely a question of repertoire, but of the whole approach to music. An attitude of high seriousness or even reverence for music, that (male) music lovers might expect to characterize a musical society evening, went ill with fashionable tittle-tattle, inevitable at fashionable society concerts. In provincial centres only able to sustain one regular series, this posed an obvious problem. As we shall see, issues like the maintenance of silence during performance came to symbolize the attitudes of the two camps. From the point of view of the musical entrepreneur, it is clear that by the 1790s it was becoming very necessary to take into account the wishes of those patrons (perhaps predominantly women) who wished to regard a concert as a social event.

A problem, peculiar to Calcutta, also weighed heavily against the long-term success of the public subscription concert—the extreme heat. Complaints about the oppressive atmosphere of concert rooms were far from uncommon:

Calcutta, 18 May 1778 Mrs Moore to Francis Fowke

> Calcutta is a stupid dull place at this time of year and affords nothing worthy of your Notice; we went to the Play a fortnight ago at my sister's request and had the Pleasure to see the Part of Lothario most wretchedly murdered by 'Beau Calcroft'; the wind blew as from a Furnace and the Play-House was an oven; judge then, what a delightful Evening we had.[86]

[84] Ibid. 49–50. [85] McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 69. [86] Fowke MS F2, 105.

A review of a benefit concert implied that the modest audience had been fortunate in avoiding monotonous music and stuffy conditions: 'Mr Lebedeff's benefit concert on Tuesday evening was very thinly attended; those who were absent, however, have little to regret, for the music, one or two pieces excepted, was tedious and dull, and the room uncomfortably hot.'[87] The reluctance of audiences to submit themselves to discomfort is all the more understandable because of the allure of the alternative. Writing in cold, damp Ireland of his distant homeland, Dean Mahomet painted a picture of the private residences on the banks of the Ganges at Calcutta, as a veritable Eden: 'On the opposite side of the river . . . some pleasant villas, the summer retreats of European Gentlemen, delightful improvements, aromatic flower gardens, winding walks planted with embowering trees on each side, and fish ponds reflecting, like an extended mirror, their blooming verdure on each margin, and Heaven's clear azure in the vaulted canopy above.'[88] Who would not prefer to relax with a drink to the sound of open-air music in such surroundings? Many private residences, moreover, had at least one room large enough for indoor music-making in comfort. Lady Clive's cousin wrote to tell her about the harpsichord she had ordered from Kirkman:

Calcutta, 12 April 1771 Thomas Kelsall to Margaret Clive

> We are nobly lodg'd both in Town and Country & at each House have an Harpsichord. That which you presented Mrs Watts has a Place in our Hall, a Room of 54 feet very lofty & in every way well calculated for Musick. This Instrument is in excellent order, & we have just made Tryal of it at a small concert.[89]

Indoors or outdoors, the eighteenth-century concert was far more than a merely musical affair; it was a place to meet friends, conduct courtships, play cards, drink and even dance. Especially in India with its extreme heat, a private mansion could undoubtedly provide a much more congenial environment, in which a select company could relax at a 'concert'. Promoters of subscription concerts in crowded, stiflingly hot, public venues faced a difficult task.

Yet for all its problems, the public concert did not die out in Calcutta, if for no other reason than that the inhabitants of the city took pride in the fact that the musical calendar in their colonial situation could at least distantly reflect the cultural way of life of the distant homeland. Throughout the 1790s, there was thus continuing support for individual benefit concerts, occasional short subscription series, and for open-air series, imitations of Vauxhall and Ranelagh. Musicians seem to have come to accept the limitations of this sphere of activity, and in most cases, those who continued to promote small-scale series kept their options open by diversifying their musical and other interests. Trinks occupied the post of organist in one of the Calcutta churches, Lebedeff became active in the theatre, while Oehme continued to trade in keyboard instruments. The end result was a rather desultory calendar of

87 *Calcutta Gazette*, 20 Aug. 1789.
88 Fisher, *The Travels of Dean Mahomet*, 38.
89 NLW, Aberystwyth, Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 34.

public musical events, the spirit of which was perhaps best captured by Captain Williamson, who thought Calcutta had little to offer musically:

> Except for some accidental quartetto parties, or the solitary warblings of some flute-player, etc., the whole may be deemed a blank. Now and then a subscription concert, for the benefit of some professor, who lives more by means of eleemosynary bounty, than by the encouragement of his abilities, calls the town together, not to listen to the notes, to the fine melodies, and rich harmonies of Haydn, etc., but to see, and to be seen, and to talk and to be talked to.

Calcutta was little different from anywhere else.

3

The Woman Amateur

The Transport, Tuning, and Maintenance of Keyboard Instruments

Much thought, tempered by experience, was given to the question of how keyboard instruments should be transported within India. The growing population of Anglo-Indians lived in closely-knit settlements, and so the transport requirements tended to be either for very short distances (within a settlement) or for much longer distances (between settlements). Indian servants were employed to carry pianofortes short distances:

Calcutta, 12 July 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> I supped last night with Mrs Plowden, and spent the evening very agreeably. I sent for my Pianoforte there, which can be brought at any time in three minutes; this is very pleasant, for hers is not kept constantly in tune. I seldom play upon any thing else in the evenings; I have it always brought into the veranda at night on account of the coolness. My touch upon this instrument is much improved—when I am playing upon it and the sweet south wind is blowing upon me, how impatient I am in the thought that many, many days must pass before we enjoy these pleasures together.[1]

Longer journeys, whenever possible, were made by river. By the 1780s, a substantial European traffic had built up along the river Ganges between Calcutta and settlements inland, as far as the kingdom of Oudh. In view of the relative scarcity of keyboards inland, amateur musicians travelling up-river usually took a harpsichord or pianoforte with them. The journey was not without its dangers. Sophia Plowden described in her diary the scene, as the boats on which the party were making the voyage started to roll badly. Within minutes, one of them had sunk, only its masts remaining visible above the water-line. There had hardly been time to unload the contents, when a second boat displayed signs of being about to capsize: 'the alarm! was now universal, & the confusion undescribable—chests, bottles, books,

[1] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E4, 202.

Millinery, a Harpsichord, eatables, drinkables, bundles of Cloths, all thrown together on the shore.'[2] Gross over-loading with the European-scale paraphernalia of travel was perhaps the cause of this accident.

Calcutta firms organized a regular boat service to deliver keyboard instruments to inland clients. Ord & Kerr advertised that they dispatched boats twice a week 'as high as Cawnpore', which was more or less at the limit of the East India Company's major sphere of influence in northern India.[3] Paxton, Cockrell & Delisle dispatched wine and a pianoforte in this way:

> We have this day dispatched for you in a small pulwar, a Chest of English Claret, which we hope will reach safe—to lessen the expense, we have forwarded by the same boat a Piano Forte for Miss Vanas, who will be charged a proportionable part of the boat hire.[4]

Well-established firms, such as this one, acted as a link between their inland clients and the Calcutta retail trade.

Maintenance was a problem for pianoforte players anywhere, but in India it turned keyboard ownership into an expensive lottery. The regularity with which instruments suffered catastrophic failure introduced an element of complete unpredictability into musical life. Margaret Fowke's experiences of the devastating effects of climate were doubtless typical. One night in 1783, her much-prized harpsichord suddenly collapsed:

Calcutta, 2 July 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> Surely I have nothing but bad news to tell of every sort and kind. I have just been touching my harpsichord, and to my infinite concern find it bewitched. It was tuned yesterday, and last night it was in perfect order. This morning just as I intended rattling off my cords, I found the keys did not answer to my touch. It sounds as an old harpsichord does that has not been tuned for ten years: some of the keys have no sound; some have a dumb kind of tone. In short this charming instrument is quite ruined. Upon my word you may smile, but I am so passionately fond of it that I write this with tears in my eyes, for I know that in this country my loss is irreparable, and can I give up my darling pursuit? I have sent after McArthur, and to relieve my suspense till he comes I scribble off this account to you. It is magic! Last night in such fine order. Both the Days heard a violent crack in the night. There is no appearance of any injury to it. I fear this is beyond the Mc's skill.[5]

Characteristically, Margaret was unable to resist investigating for herself and she managed to identify what had happened:

> McArthur is so long in making his appearance that since writing the above I have been examining my harpsichord, and think I have discovered the cause of this deplorable misfortune . . . Very heavy rains have fallen for these two days, and last night the air was so damp that as I played upon the harpsichord, you would have imagined water had been thrown over the keys. I imagine its present condition is entirely owing to the excessive damp, which has swelled the wood so much that none of the jacks will play well. I observe that the whole row

[2] BL, OIOC, Plowden MS F127/94.
[3] *Calcutta Gazette*, 1 Oct. 1789.
[4] Fowke MS D12, 118; 18 Nov. 1785.
[5] Fowke MS E4, 163.

of octave jacks do not go quite down, which you know will muffle the tone of the first unison, but besides that, neither the jacks of the first or second move easily. To satisfy myself that this is the cause I have taken out a few jacks of the 2[d] unison and octave, and left on only the first unison. I have thoroughly rubbd these, and I have the delight to find that they sound very well . . . McArthur has examined it. He says more has happened to it than I imagined, and he is certainly right for the warp or twist which the sounding board has taken has changed the position of the strings. This at least is McArthur's account and I say he is right because the quills of all the octave jacks strike against the first unison wires. I am most truly vexed at this accident. I fear it may well be a long time before I get the use of it again.

The repair job effected by MacArthur took a whole day:

McArthur and the black carpenter are seeing what is to be done to the harpsichord. The octave quills shall strike against the first unison wires. McArthur says the wires must all be moved—I am almost afraid to trust him. At any rate it is a terrible remedy, for some of the strings must break and I have none to replace them. I have taken every precaution to secure the first that come, and I have written to Ned.[6] I am very glad I have the Piano forte.

Despite her forebodings, Margaret was soon able to report that the instrument had 'recovered its tone entirely'.[7] She was obliged to requill the instrument herself, since her current tuner, a musician called De Souza, was 'deficient' in this skill.[8] The strain that a double 8′ unison and a single 4′ placed upon the soundboards of even robustly constructed harpsichords is well documented, but the Calcutta heat must have 'finished off' innumerable instruments which might have survived for longer in more temperate climes.

If damage to instruments was a constant threat, tuning was an uninterrupted nightmare. It had to be done so frequently that even if the cost of an individual session were acceptable, the cumulative expense of constant attention would quickly become prohibitive. Through no fault of their own, tuners thus offered a service that was self-evidently poor value for money. One solution was to attempt to learn to tune for oneself. Williamson even advised young women pianists to take a course in tuning before setting sail:

She ought to qualify herself to tune the instrument; which may be effected in the course of a month, or six weeks, by attention to the instructions of a regular tuner, who would feel himself well satisfied under a moderate compensation. This is a point whereon I dwell rather particularly, knowing that, even in Calcutta, Madras, or Bombay, a good tuner is not always to be had; and that, in all other situations, throughout the interior, scarce a professional person can be found. Besides, in a country whose climate deranges the most skilful adjustment of the wires, often in a few minutes, merely by a slight exposure to heat, or to damp, the expence attendant upon such frequent tunings, as are indispensably requisite, would speedily absorb the full value of the instrument itself; the ordinary rates being a guinea for a grand-piano, and twelve shillings for a square one. Therefore, whether considered as a convenience, or as a matter of economy, too much cannot be said in recommendation of every lady's learning to tune her piano before she embarks.[9]

[6] Her cousin, Edward Holland. [7] Fowke MS E4, 199. [8] Fowke MS E4, 269.
[9] T. Williamson, *The East India Vade Mecum*, 2 vols. (London, 1810).

Such a course of action made obvious economic sense. At Indian rates, the cost of a grand piano would be matched by one hundred tuning sessions. As Williamson pointed out, tuners of any kind were simply unavailable in many small interior stations. The scarcity of tuners and the long journey involved inevitably increased the expense. Even in England distance was a factor. In the 1770s, Broadwood's basic tuning charge was five shillings, but seven shillings and six pence for those living further afield, and ten shillings and sixpence for those 'in the depths of the country'.[10] The depths of the country included areas now in London. A bill submitted by Earl Spencer to Burkat Shudi and Jn° Broadwood, asked for five shillings for tuning a harpsichord 'in town' and ten shillings and six pence for tuning one in Wimbledon.[11] When it seemed likely that her father would be sent inland, Margaret hastily took a course of lessons, spurred on by the knowledge that a friend had succeeded in acquiring a useful degree of skill:

Calcutta, n.d. Margaret Fowke to Mrs Kitchen

> I believe I mentioned to you that when my father had a prospect of going to Benares, the fear of being entirely without the use of my Harpsichord in that solitude induced me to attempt to learn the unpleasing but useful task of tuning it. I have made, by taking short and frequent lessons, a good progress. Miss Charlotte Clavering, to avoid giving up Music in which she has great delight, during the voyage made the same attempt, and succeeded so well that she knew enough to keep her Piano Forte in perfect order.[12]

Most young women, however, were unable or unwilling to acquire this skill. They then faced a frustrating dilemma. There was strong pressure on them to use their time in India to the best advantage by improving their music to a socially useful level, yet on a grossly out of tune instrument this was scarcely possible. Two of Margaret's correspondents, writing from inland stations, complained of the difficulties that they faced. One wrote that she was rapidly *losing* rather than improving her musical accomplishments. She feared that upon her return to England she would be 'horribly abused' by her father for having 'neglected my Musick'. But: 'I have not been able to meet with any body to put my Piano Forte in order for me, and you know how soon they get out of repair from the great heat of this climate.'[13] Another in similar vein wrote from Cawnpore that she had acquired some music from Europe this year: 'but of what use is it? both my harpsichord and fortepiano are laid up with violent colds and I can get nobody to care [for] them.'[14] In desperation some advertised for tuners as in the *India Gazette* of 17 August 1786:

Tuning of harpsichords

Wanted by a Gentleman up the Country, a person who can keep an Harpsichord in tune and order: if he can also teach to play, or can write a good hand, he will meet with greater encouragement.

[10] D. Wainwright, *Broadwood by Appointment: A History* (London: Quiller Press, 1982), 56.
[11] BL, Althorpe MS F184. [12] Fowke MS D10, 13.
[13] Fowke MS E5, 10; 6 Dec. 1783. [14] Fowke MS E7, 4; 22 Sept. 1784.

Everything, in other words, was secondary to tuning ability. The services of paid professionals, however, were often of highly dubious value. Standards of tuning among all-purpose musicians seem to have been abysmally low. Margaret was at least honest enough to admit her own shortcomings. On one occasion, she simply could not make it come right. She sent for a Portuguese musician, but his efforts were hardly any better. Having once, so she claimed, tuned 'with great ease and quickness', she reassured her brother that the 'tuning art' had not gone from her. She had merely been ill, and, as a consequence, her ear had been 'puzzled by tuning backwards and forwards'.[15]

The tuning method adopted by Margaret Fowke and many other young women was that published by Pasquali (Ex. 1). In effect this method proposes tuning by trial and error. The fifths are to be tuned 'rather flat than otherways'. If the resulting thirds are 'fine', 'what has been done may be depended on', but 'if otherways it will be best to begin afresh'. The author was correct in his assumption that his amateur readership would be unfamiliar with the scientific basis of tuning. Francis Fowke's occasional attempts to enlighten his sister on the subject do not remotely establish a working method. Flattening the fifths could in theory have produced equal temperament, but Pasquali is clearly expecting a wolf fifth between A flat and E flat. Not surprisingly, this method regularly defeated Margaret. Eventually she worked out a *modus operandi* with her Portuguese musician in Benares: 'I tune the 5ths very tolerably, and he performs the remainder of the task', perhaps the tuning of higher and lower octaves.[16]

The incessant tuning of harpsichords came to be regarded as central to the Indian experience. One amateur poet dedicated a remarkable piece on the subject to William Aldersey, a Council member. In this specimen of ageless doggerel, the inability of a tuner to eradicate the last 'sick semitone' is likened to the trouble a lady has in expunging that last troublesome pimple from her visage!

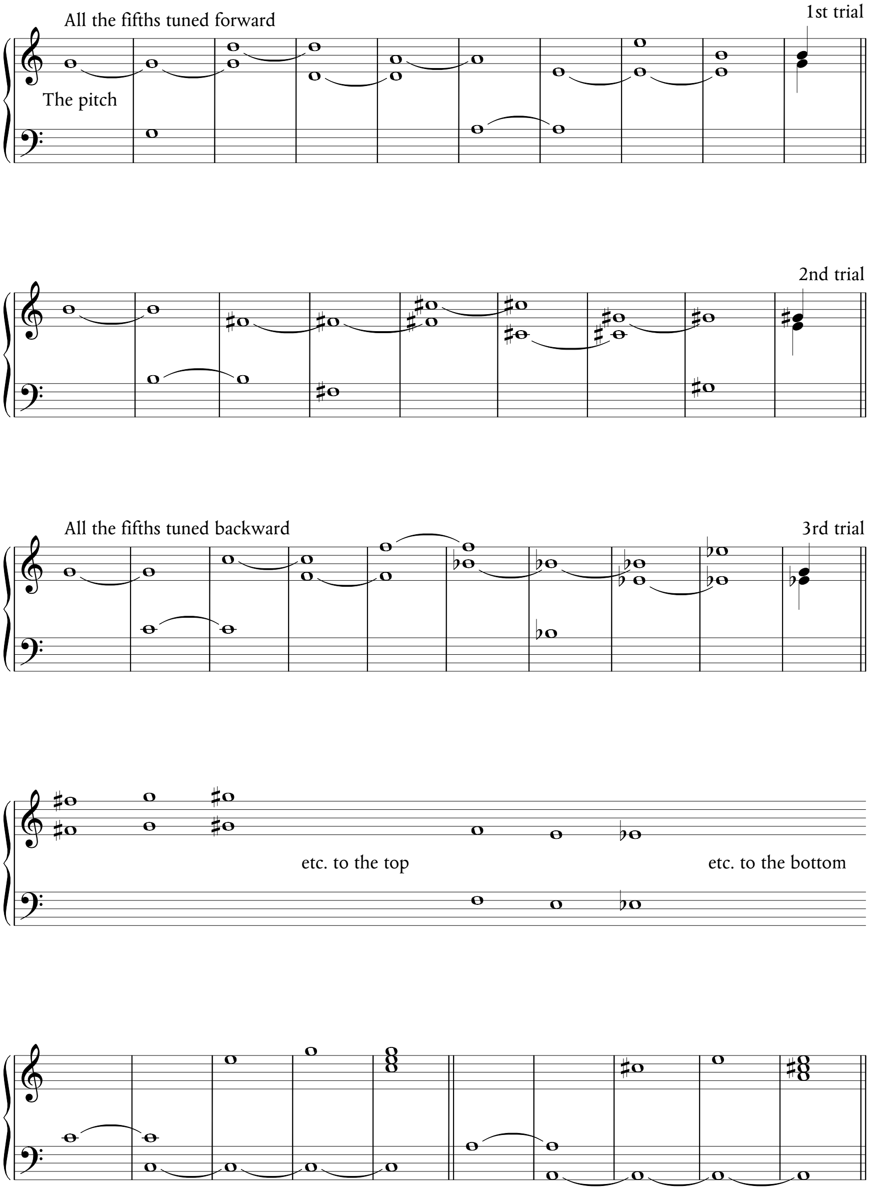
The Harpsichord

to William Aldersey Esq.

When on the long-neglected muffled Lyre
Dissonance vibrates from each jarring wire;
When ev'ry String relax'd forgets its tone,
And chords offend with jangle not their own;
The skilful artist can repair with ease
Th'harmonic order of the nobler Keys—
Potent of sound, as with critic Ear he tries
the gamut's nice gradations as they rise;
Combines, divides, restores, depresses, lifts,
From pitch to pitch from chord to discord shifts;
Sharpens the grave, the more acute corrects;

[15] Fowke MS E4, 67.
[16] Fowke MS E4, 599.

Ex. 1. 'An Approved Method of Tuning the Harpsichord' (N. Pasquali, *The Art of Fingering the Harpsichord*, Edinburgh, 1758)



Relieves disorders, & supplies defects;
Now hears the thirds, now fifths, now fourths prevail,
As due proportions modulate the scale;
Unites the distant cliffs, & bids the sound
Of music fill & animate the whole.
Yet spite of pains, our note imperfect still
Grates on our ear, & baffles all his skill.
As some rude pimple on a Lady's face
Oft changes places, yet maintains a place;
Forc'd from the forehead, to the temple goes.
From thence dispatch'd, still rises on the nose.
So one sick semitone the gamut round,
Will shift and shift, but never quit the ground.

When finally, the discord has been eliminated, this symbol of the entire imperial enterprise can once more give forth its harmonious sound:

And bids the Lyre of Empire thus renew'd
In concord vibrate for the gen'ral good.[17]

Thus the harpsichord, an icon of imperial identity, came to be seen as representing the colonial endeavour itself, problematic, but worth the effort. Only when finally in tune, tamed like India herself, could the 'Lyre of Empire' resound to its fullest effect, and the beneficent effects of British rule become manifest.

The Piano Student

Four distinct phases are discernible in Margaret Fowke's studies in the art of pianoforte playing: early home-based lessons, lasting throughout the years of childhood, and conducted strictly in private; shorter but much more intensive periods of work, representing the struggle to attain a level of accomplishment sufficient to achieve some social standing in new circles of acquaintances, and, in due course, success in the marriage market; the eventual achievement, around the time of her marriage, of her desired status as a 'finished' player; a long and gradual decline, following the assumption of maternal duties. Her development as a piano player thus follows a typical pattern of rise and fall, with a sharp peak occurring in the years of young adulthood. The question of how good a player Margaret had become, when family responsibilities began to occupy her attention, is impossible to answer with any degree of objectivity—no independent assessment of her standard of play is extant. What is of much greater interest now is how she perceived her own progress as a performer, and the extent to which she felt that her objectives were being achieved.

It was traditional for a young girl to begin with music lessons at home under the supervision of a governess. After a certain level of progress had been achieved, a pro-

[17] NLW, Aberystwyth, Ormathwaite MS FB3/10.

fessional teacher might be brought in. The governess, whatever her own abilities, would then immediately assume the subordinate position of practice supervisor, and she would also act as chaperon. It is clear from the little that is known of Margaret's early lessons that she acquired the rudiments of piano-playing under the guidance of her guardians, Mrs Kitchen and Mrs Ledien. When her uncle wrote to approve of his niece having a music master ('should Bath furnish any musick masters they approve'), he insisted that one of the two ladies always accompany her at lessons.[18] Margaret later acknowledged the tedious nature of this contribution to her early musical education:

Calcutta, September 1783 Margaret Fowke to Joseph Fowke

> Pray oblige me by writing to Mrs Kitchen soon. Among other things introduce my progress in music. I declare to you that vanity has not the least share in this request, but I know how very happy the account will make her. She has often watched over my practice for half an hour together and seemed to have found a reward for this tedious employment when I rattled off my piece with some ease. Mrs K. is very conversant in music and has been a delightful player.[19]

Margaret hints that her early musical studies in England had failed to inspire her. In an undated letter, she wrote to Mrs Kitchen about her progress:

Calcutta, n.d. [*c.*1778] Margaret Fowke to Mrs Kitchen

> You ask me how my Music goes on. I can assure you I can give a very good account of it. I take great pleasure in attending to it. I shall never be a good performer, but I play infinitely better than I did when I left England. In this I have a double inducement, both from the amusement it affords myself, and the pleasure which I can give my brother, as he is passionately fond of music and has a very good taste in it.[20]

Five years later, still unmarried and now knowing the real social value of being acknowledged as an 'accomplished' player, Margaret admitted that although she had always been fond of hearing music, she had 'neglected it in England merely from the want of application'.[21]

For a young woman whose musical experience had hitherto been confined to domestic lessons, the next phase of study, often undertaken away from home, could be a liberating experience. The excitement of new and exotic locations and meeting new circles of acquaintances often went hand in hand with an increasingly serious approach to musical studies. The motivation is clear; as young women reached the age of courtship and marriage, the pressure to attain a reasonable standard of performance became suddenly much more urgent, as the consequences of failing to find a partner dawned. Margaret Fowke's periods of intense practice were marked by acute anxiety and self-doubt; as an unmarried woman, the fear of being found wanting in musical accomplishment ran very deep indeed in her. Yet although the prospect of making her début in a new social circle filled her with trepidation, such

[18] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS F2, 12; 30 Jan. 1772. [19] Fowke MS E4, 462.
[20] Fowke MS D10, 13. [21] BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/11, 45; 29 Apr. 1783.

events at least provided a clear framework against which her progress could be measured. In India, the time-frame was determined by the return home. Writing after an illness in Benares in 1785, she complained that she was being prevented 'from accomplishing my favorite aim of being a finished musician before I arrive in England'.[22] Nothing could be more telling of the state of mind of young women in these 'finishing' phases than their attitude to practice. In one of her practice 'frenzies', Margaret became extremely sensitive to the merest hint that she might not be doing enough. When her brother had the temerity to suggest that she might work harder, she flashed back: 'I work very much Sir! This is the 6th day of my performing my exercizes without *once* missing.'[23] Frequent bouts of illness and a near permanent heat exhaustion gave her much anguish as her carefully prepared schedules were disrupted.

One writer, Hannah More, commented with irony on the amount of time spent on the musical means (accomplished piano-playing) to the young woman's prime social goal (good marriage):

> Suppose your pupil to begin at six years of age and to continue at the average of four hours a-day *only*, Sunday excepted, and thirteen days allowed for travelling annually, till she is eighteen, the state stands thus; 300 days multiplied by four, the number of hours amount to 1200; that number multiplied by twelve, which is the number of years, amounts to 14,400 hours![24]

The real irony, in the case of the individual upon whose efforts this calculation was based, was that she married a man 'who *disliked music*!' Margaret Fowke seems to have been well aware of the relationship between musical accomplishment and marriage, yet it was far from being her only motivation. A genuine and wholly unconditional love of music comes across in her letters. Her ambition was to achieve accomplishment for its own sake, at least as much as for the quality of husband that it might bring.

Margaret's letters during her periods of intense practice provide fascinating material for a study of the relationship between pupil and teacher. The circumstances of her life in Calcutta necessitated the employment of a succession of different teachers, some for short periods only. She had many years earlier been cautioned that masters 'teaching on different principles may confound what you have already learnt', but she now had no option but to change teachers regularly.[25] One consequence of this, as of the abysmal quality of much of what was on offer, is that she assumed much greater control of the pace and direction of her own musical progress. She was not only in a position to challenge the quality of the teaching she was receiving, but was also able to determine its content.

No aspect of eighteenth-century musical life in England was more regularly satirized than the music lesson: 'Numerous barbed satires mock middle class pre-

[22] Fowke MS E4, 599. [23] Fowke MS E4, 95.

[24] R. Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 43.

[25] Fowke MS F2, 2; 31 Mar. 1771.

tensions to musical taste, especially the archetypal daughter's piano lesson.'[26] Leppert describes the practice of music teaching, as represented in eighteenth-century ideology, as 'an immensely complicated and conflicted discourse'.[27] It involved a three-way relationship that had the potential to undermine social proprieties both between sexes and classes. Caricatures of the music lesson thus revel in the sexually rapacious, foreign teacher, the boorish, drunk father, unaware of what is going on, and the innocent, vulnerable young woman. Such scenes, Leppert argues, represent the dangers inherent in any loss of control on the part of paternal authority. In view of the pervasiveness of this stereotype, it will be interesting to examine Margaret Fowke's account of her relationship with one of her music teachers in Calcutta; it is a rare example of a participant's view of one of the commonest musical occurrences.

The three-way relationship of the satirical stereotype is exactly represented by Margaret, her father, and the professional musician whom they employed during the first half of 1783. The dealings between the three make a nice study in authority. Joseph Fowke was inclined to exert control over his daughter in an arbitrary fashion. Early in 1783, several heated letters to her brother show her fulminating against the 'slavery' which her father wished to impose on her. In adversity, Margaret showed an impressive strength of will. After much passionate argument and the careful manipulation of the opinion of family friends, she managed to persuade her father to give in to her wishes. In this strained atmosphere, MacArthur, her music teacher, had to tread diplomatically. He was always welcomed by Joseph Fowke—the two shared musical tastes, or at least the musician gave him to think so—and, using this as his excuse, he skilfully insinuated himself into the household. Margaret, who was much less inclined to make use of his services, felt frustrated by her inability to get rid of him. She poured out her feelings with passion:

Calcutta, 21 May 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> Besides G. [her father] early hours of an evening, I have one *continual* interruption in *McArthur*. He comes at about 11 and never stirs out of the house till after sunset. These long visits he favours me with at least 3 times a week. I cannot tell you how very disagreeable this proceeding is to me. I am so far advanced in music that it is not in the Mc's powers to give me many hints. All that I want is practise and I am absolutely prevented from that while he is in the way. If he only called for an hour or two, two or three times a week, his accompaniment and looking at new pieces would amuse me, but as he manages it, it is a loss of three or four days in the week which I cannot afford. It is impossible to get rid of him. Before dinner if I leave him G. is always ready to engage him in conversation. If after dinner he will stay in the hall, look over the tuning of the harpsichord, or take up a book. Thus the hours fly away without profit, and yet surely a few more arduous and constant endeavours would bring me to the top of the hill. McArthur is a very obliging man which makes me the less willing to say any thing. Indeed I don't know how I could possibly introduce it, but I am so hurt at this

[26] S. McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 13.

[27] R. Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1993), 66.

> interruption, that I am resolved if he continues these intrusions to order the Durwan very frequently to say I am out or ill. McArthur seems to me to be more hurt at my employing Oame, than he dared express when you were here. He said today, 'Pray Ma'am what do you and Oame do together?' 'I play Corelli, or the accompaniment of songs, or make him assist me by playing the recitatives.' 'I don't—(hesitating) I *can't* see the use of him.' This was certainly impertinent, but I made him no reply. Oame has such ill health that I believe I shall be obliged to employ Ladd, which I imagine will stir up the Mc's wrath anew, but no person shall ever dictate to me that has not a right. I wrote this in a very ill humour, for he has been here the whole day, and now that it is just 5 o'clock, he is in the middle of a long conversation with G., which from their love of the amusement may continue an hour longer.
>
> P.S. McArthur stayed here till 8 in the evening.[28]

After another day-long visit, she wrote: 'The Mc has been here the whole day, which is really so much time lost to me, for I can neither practise the claveçin con spirito or sing.' It is clear that Margaret felt that she had progressed beyond the point where this professional could perform any useful service for her other than as an accompanist on the violin, or as a guide to new music, but his presence in the house seriously inhibited her. Private practice was evidently out of the question until the musician had left. MacArthur's motives for his lengthy stays seem clear enough; as a professional with a living to earn, he could not afford to lose a client. By engaging in long conversations on musical matters with Joseph Fowke, he was able to maintain his position in the household. Although she was provoked by his attitude, Margaret had no authority actually to eject him, and indeed was obliged to make use of him often enough, when other musicians were indisposed. There is no hint in Margaret Fowke's account of any awareness that sexual impropriety might be an issue, and yet her dealings with MacArthur certainly show that relationships with a professional musician in the home could be tense. As Leppert has pointed out, the employment of a professional musician in a domestic context was unproblematic, 'so long as a barrier was maintained between performers and those who hired them'.[29] Once any kind of personal relationship developed along the spectrum—employee–valued employee–acquaintance–friend—difficult questions of social propriety were constantly liable to be thrown up.

The following month, battle was resumed. At issue now was the loan of a pianoforte. Owing to the exceptionally high failure rate of keyboard instruments in India, lending and borrowing were very important mechanisms in ensuring continuity of access. The short-term loan of a piano during the period between the collapse of a friend's instrument and its repair or replacement was part of normal civilized behaviour. Closely-knit circles of amateur musicians in effect maintained 'pools' of keyboard instruments; if one person's instrument failed, the group would simply draw upon the resources of another member. But to offer a pianoforte or harpsichord to someone outside an immediate circle of acquaintance was a very different matter. Moreover, it is very clear from Margaret's letters that while the loan of

[28] Fowke MS E4, 109. [29] Leppert, *The Sight of Sound*, 66.

an instrument from woman to woman, or man to man, could be taken as an act of friendship, the loan of an instrument from a woman to a man (or vice versa) was a transaction requiring the utmost delicacy. In attempting to arrange the loan of her pianoforte to an unmarried man, MacArthur blundered unthinkingly into a social minefield:

Calcutta, 25 June 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> I will give you an instance of assurance in McArthur today, which appears to me truly Caledonian. Looking at my Piano forte—'Do you make much use of your Pianoforte Ma'am?' As it has been out of tune for some days I have not played upon it, and, not seeing the consequence of my answer, I said inadvertently, 'No', that I had used it very little. 'Then Ma'am will you lend it me just for two or three days? It is for poor Seaton'. I really had not the presence of mind to refuse him. I said rather coolly, 'Yes', and a few minutes after, 'but I cannot well spare it longer than the time you mention'. 'Well Ma'am when you want it send for it.' Observe the incroachment; he first asked it for two or three days, and next wishes Seaton to keep it till I claim it again. It certainly was a very extraordinary liberty, for could McArthur suppose I would have brought it to Lady Day's, unless I had proposed to myself some pleasure in playing upon it? I was angry with myself after he was gone for having been such a fool, and tho' it is highly disagreeable to retract, I wrote him word that upon recollection I did not think it worth while to send away the Piano forte for two or three days, and as it was not my own and I wished to get it in order and play upon it, I could not well spare it for a longer time. I am hurt either way; I do'nt like to send away the Piano forte, or to be over-reached so. On the other hand I felt a great deal of compassion for poor Seaton who has no instrument and is so passionately fond of music. I believe I shall ask Shore's leave to lend it to him for a short time and send it to him from myself. I beg that when you write, you will tell me particularly what you think of the Mc's behaviour in this affair. Perhaps I may see it wrong, but I do not think he w^{d} have taken this liberty if you had been here.[30]

Margaret, sensitive as always about the social propriety of her actions, had now got herself into an awkward position. Again, she poured out her feelings to her brother:

Calcutta, 27 June 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> I told you all my grievances about the Piano forte. I seldom refuse any thing without its giving me some pain. I did not indeed care for McArthur, for I thought he had incroached upon me very impertinently, but I was not altogether easy about Seton, who is a benevolent worthy creature, an invalid, and music the favorite amusement of his leisure. This morning I wrote to Shore requesting his permission to lend it for a short time. Having obtained it, I wrote to Seton, told him it had given me real concern to refuse McArthur's request of lending him a Piano forte for so short a time as a few days, that had it been my own I w^{d} willingly have done it, that however I had applied to the gentleman who lent it me, had obtained his permission, that I should have the pleasure of sending it him in the evening, and that he was welcome to keep it during the time I was at Lady Day's. Now I beg that you will inform me whether I behaved handsomely

[30] Fowke MS E4, 132.

> in this affair. I did not know for what space of time he wanted the Piano forte. I therefore did not like to seem quite indifferent about the time of receiving it back, as it would make me appear ill natured when I claimed it again, which I wish to do on my return home, as it is easily moved into our veranda, which is so cool of an evening. On the other hand I hate to confer a favor with reserve. I enclose his answer, and tho' I really did not think I had behaved unhandsomely, it seemed to me an acknowledgement to a person he did not like to receive it from. In the evening I wrote my compliments with the Piano forte, which I begged he would keep till he went up the Country—you will observe that in his note he mentions an intention of going soon. I therefore do'nt wish to ask him for it before he goes—he is heartily welcome to it. I was prevented from sending it this evening before sunset by slight showers of rain. Just as the candles were lit McArthur sent me a note begging leave to inform me that Mr Seton had obtained the loan of a Piano forte. I was a good deal piqued at this, for as I had positively refused it to him yesterday, and he knew nothing of the steps I had taken today, had it not the air of insolence and triumph to let me know Mr Seton had obtained one without my help?—I can hardly refer it to any other cause. I think it probable that McArthur has accidentally heard of Seton's having met with a Piano forte without knowing it to be mine, for if Seton had met with another and meant to prevent me from taking the trouble of sending mine in the evening, I think it would be a very singular piece of rudeness to employ McArthur to inform me of it, instead of politely thanking me for the trouble I had taken about it in the morning. As it was then fair, without taking any notice of McArthur's note, I sent the Piano-forte and my note to Seton—Imann Buksh is just returned. McArthur was with him. Pray let me know all that you think of my behaviour . . .[31]

This singularly honest account of her emotions illustrates her underlying fear that if the man rejected her offer, it would be seen as a social rebuff. Her anxiety about the incident surfaces later, when she reports overhearing a casual conversation about the loan of another pianoforte to a woman in Lucknow. Unusually her account loses coherence at this point, but it seems that she had realized from what she had just overheard, that an instrument lent to her had originally been intended for this woman. Torn between the excellence of the instrument ('I am a very great slave to this piano-forte from the pleasure it gives me') and what she evidently felt had been a social *faux pas* ('how ill it would sound that the gentleman in whose charge it was, left it with me instead of sending it to her'), she hastened to send it back.[32] That a musician of Margaret's commitment should consider relinquishing her favourite instrument as a direct consequence of how she imagined its loan would be perceived socially shows how real that kind of pressure was. As so often, Margaret Fowke's attitudes mirror closely those adopted by women in the novels of Jane Austen. In *Emma*, Frank Churchill sends a Broadwood square pianoforte anonymously to his secret fiancée, Jane Fairfax. Unthinkingly, Mrs Weston causes its recipient intense embarrassment, 'having so much to ask and to say as to tone, touch, and pedal, totally unsuspicious of that wish of saying as little about it as possible, which she [Emma] plainly read in the fair heroine's countenance'.

[31] Fowke MS E4, 135. [32] Fowke MS E4, 235.

Matters for Margaret Fowke were soon to get even worse, when the collapse of her harpsichord left her without a keyboard instrument of any kind. Gritting her teeth, she had to send for MacArthur, who, true to form, offended her once again:

I was obliged to send for McArthur on this occasion, tho' I am extremely displeased with him on account of his behaviour to me in regard to the Pianoforte. He could have no reason for writing me word that Seaton had found one, but to offer me an insolent triumph. He told me today that I must send for my Pianoforte from Seton's during the repairs of my harpsichord, and on my saying something rather against it, he told me, *I* thought in an impertinent manner, that Mr Seton had one, and that he did not want mine. In short McArthur is a low, insolent, incroaching fellow, and I believe after my harpsichord is put in order I shall shut my doors against him, that I may not be affronted by his surly looks. I hate him very much![33]

Underlying Margaret's constant irritation at her music teacher's behaviour was perhaps a degree of frustration at her dependence on a social inferior. The music teacher, although a mere servant, 'had momentary power over a member of the family'.[34] The behaviour of the socially inferior music teacher was certainly a subject of concern to writers of courtesy books. There was a growing tendency to credit foreigners with polite manners, and by the late eighteenth century, Italian and German music masters were rated more highly for their urbane and fluent social manners than their English counterparts. MacArthur, not even a rough if 'honest' Englishman, but a 'surly' Scot, was at least running true to national type!

Contemptuous though she was of the attitudes and accomplishments of some of the teachers she was obliged to use in Calcutta, Margaret does not seem to have had a falsely inflated estimation of her own level of attainment. By 1783, she had been studying music for some fifteen years and was beginning to realize that mastery of her instrument was not easily to be won. It was only too easy for self-deception to creep into evaluations of progress. Professional musicians had a vested interest in praising the efforts of their pupils, and the promise of a 'quick and easy' path to 'complete' success was routinely made in published tutors. Some even implied that their method could provide relief from the burden of intensive practice. In Bemetzrieder's harpsichord tutor, the master draws his disciple's attention to the daughter of his friend, who 'practises six hours a day' and ought 'to hate music':

Master. I do not suppose you ever said to her Miss I will have you play the Harpsichord; I will have it so, though you should break your heart. This is not the general mode of speaking; but have you never said to her, vexed at the small progress you saw her make, Miss, Miss, you do not play at all—you do not practise. If you do not like music, there is an end of it, say so, and I will pay off your master, burn your books, and throw your instrument out of the window. To this your ward may have answered—Upon my word, Sir, I love music of all things—My harpsichord is my greatest happiness—yes, indeed, the happiness of my life—and I would not quit it for the world—You go about your business, and she, poor girl, goes in tears to practice.

Disciple. The picture is somewhat like to my knowledge.

[33] Fowke MS E4, 187. [34] Leppert, *Music and Image*, 59.

Friend. Whether the picture is like or not is of no consequence. But you, Sir, it seems, have a secret; and it consists in relieving your scholars from the pain of practising. Why have not other masters the same? Perhaps, because you have common-sense, and all the rest are fools.[35]

Much good business was undoubtedly done by raising false hopes, yet beyond a certain point the deception could not be maintained.

Committed and self-disciplined though she was in her keyboard studies, there were times when Margaret toyed with the idea of taking up an easier instrument. The English guitar, a fashionable woman's instrument, was well known in Calcutta, and Margaret had witnessed several performances:

Calcutta, April 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> Last night at the Williams's we met Mrs Tolly, who played and sung to her guittar. After Miss Webb's divine performance, no other really gives much satisfaction. Mrs Tolly has some perfections in her play—a neat and rapid performance are I think the principal. She seems to be deficient in tone, and very much so in time. She excels in those little turns which are performed without striking the string twice; they have really a pretty effect.[36]

The English guitar was indeed an instrument which could deliver quick if ultimately unsatisfying results, and Margaret was struck by the speed with which she could acquire some facility: 'I now and then take up the Guittar. Whenever I give only half an hour's attention to this instrument I am almost surprised at my own progress.'[37] It made a pleasant contrast with the unceasing effort demanded by the harpsichord. She had an acute sense that time for her, both as a musician and as an unmarried woman, was fast running out. She confided to her brother her fear that she was becoming too old for any further progress: 'I have sometimes practised with the utmost care for an hour together, but I am almost five and twenty mon très cher. What can be done at these years?'[38] In a remarkable passage, she compared courtship directly with the mastery of the harpsichord:

Calcutta, June 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> Like a fair lady in chivalry, the harpsichord makes for a long time unkind returns. At last, some few favors are the rewards of years of faithful service. Like a proud beauty it requires constant as well as ardent and passionate attentions; small neglects are punished with cruel scorn, & the sweet prospect of possession is more distant than ever. Still, like the fair Lady, it is *at last* conquered by perseverance, but the happy conquerors of both the Lady and the harpsichord may grow grey before they gather their laurels, & the laurels of conquest hang gracefully over the brow of youth.[39]

Faced with her inadequacy in several areas she exclaims: 'cadences! preludes! keys! thorough bass! accompaniment! graces! fingering! Mon Dieu! how many branches

[35] A. Bemetzrieder, *Leçons de Clavecin, et Principes d'Harmonie* (Paris, 1771, trans. 1778, 2nd. edn. 1785).
[36] Fowke MS E4, 27.
[37] Fowke MS E4, 116.
[38] Fowke MS E4, 107.
[39] Fowke MS E4, 116.

there are to this tree, and why did I not set off a little sooner?'[40] Yet there was also a sense of approaching accomplishment, as when she wrote of her determination to conquer her 'remaining difficulties'.

Calcutta, 5 May 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> Heavens what an idle chit I have been! I am now recovering lost ground. I shall recover it, tho' at the expense of more labour than I like. However I *will* pay that high price for something like perfection in an art which we both adore. But that point continually flees from me. I am so eager in this delightful pursuit, that the solitary hours fly tolerably fast, even in this house—but I pant for the end of it.[41]

The 'end' for Margaret was not the abandonment of music, but the attainment of accomplishment, its recognition in 'society', followed by the reward of a good marriage.

The complete curriculum of the amateur keyboard player in the late eighteenth century encompassed the skills necessary to function both as accompanist and soloist. Margaret seems not to have considered the idea of specializing as a soloist; to have done so would have been to place in jeopardy an important social objective, for not to be able to accompany was not to be able to accompany unmarried male violinists and singers. The core discipline for the accompanist was still to be able to read from a bass-line, with or without figures, a skill that was particularly important for Margaret, since many of her male acquaintances, including those from the Catch Club, were enthusiasts for the 'ancient' repertoire. Margaret thus set herself the task of learning the figured bass parts of a number of Purcell songs. With her innate musicianship, she soon came to appreciate Purcell's musical qualities, and devoted herself with enthusiasm to *Orpheus Britannicus*:

Calcutta, 26 April 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> In the camp basket is our first copy of Purcel, I believe very correct in the treble tho' shabby and blotted. Pray learn 'Let the dreadful Engines' in a very complete manner. I shall apply to the accompanyment with delight if I think you are studying the song. I have not yet accompanied Messink in it, but I have an idea that I shall please myself more in that than in either of the former mad songs. Don't put off learning things till we meet; let us each learn a great deal, that our voices and instruments may form sweet harmony as soon as we meet.[42]

The transition from private practice to actual accompaniment was a difficult one. Margaret spent an evening accompanying Messink, the President of the Calcutta Catch Club, and things did not go as smoothly as she might have wished:

Calcutta, 5 May 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> Messink called last night which was Sunday. G. [Joseph Fowke] detained him to supper. We were alone. I am particularly well pleased with my manner of taking chords in the Recitative of the song of 'Let the dreadful engines'. I thought myself very certain

[40] Fowke MS E4, 79. [41] Fowke MS E4, 79. [42] Fowke MS E4, 55.

> of the time likewise and yet I really accompanied Messink uncommonly ill. I don't think he breaks the time in the smallest degree in this recitative, tho' I certainly ought to be able to follow him if he did. He was very patient and good natured, but tho' we performed it once or twice, my blunders had so embarassed me that I could not recover myself. I desired him to sing 'Seek not to know' which I could not accompany but played with him. It requires a fine voice. With that requisite it is a delightful song. He seemed much pleased with it and has promised to learn it. There is a violin accompaniment. He desired me to try to play the bass of 'Let Cesar and Urania'. As I had never touched a note of it I declined it, but Mr P. [President] observed that the bass was so simple that it would be a shame not to play it at sight. With this little rebuke I begun it. I was only out once. I afterwards played the second with the bass, while he sung the upper part. I really had the good fortune to succeed pretty well. My copy is a very fair and correct one, and Messink assisted me by giving me an idea of it. It is in a plaintive and pleasing style in C minor. I am not so much struck with it was with some other of Purcel's duets, but I still think it a fine one. Afterwards with Mr President's assistance I tried 'Sing all ye Muses'. I had never touched a note of it, so that you will think this was a night for conquering difficulties. I played the upper part and bass—he sung the second. I have a very high idea of this duet. It is striking and varied in that delightful manner, almost peculiar I think to Purcel. We got thro' it well enough to give me a very tolerable idea of the piece. This morning I tried to sing it. The upper part is all in the best part of my voice, and I think suits it as well as any thing I sing.[43]

Margaret's approach to accompaniment was almost certainly influenced by Pasquali. His general advice is plain and practical. He describes the accompaniment of solo songs as one of the 'nicest tasks' of the thoroughbass player, as it depends entirely upon '*Judgment, Taste* and *Discretion*'.[44] The accompanist is to be a servant of the voice, and therefore 'the thinner the chords the better'. Margaret several times wrote of thinning the chords, though usually her reason for doing so was, as she frankly admits, because she felt unable to play at speed with full chords. For amateurs, the association between speed and thoroughbass was at the best of times rather tenuous. Lady Clive wrote of 'learning to play Thorough Bass, & quick music', as though the two were mutually exclusive categories.[45] For chords in recitatives Pasquali recommends: 'for *common* speech, a quick Harpeggio; for the *tender* a slow one; and, for anything of *Passion*, where *Anger, Surprise* etc is expressed, little or no Harpeggio, but rather dry strokes, playing with both Hands almost at once.' If there is a symphony for violin or flute and no player, the accompanist must play it with the right hand and revert to the chordal accompaniment in the song, advice clearly also applicable to vocal duet accompaniments, when only one singer was present. This, Margaret valiantly attempted to do.

Even when alone with a friend of the family, Margaret was painfully insecure about her ability to accompany unfamiliar songs, yet to refuse to sight-read at all was hardly possible. At the root of Margaret's diffidence lay the fear of public exposure. To have one's shortcomings 'noticed', struck at the heart of the image of accom-

[43] Fowke MS E4, 75.
[44] N. Pasquali, *Thorough-Bass Made Easy* (Edinburgh, 1757, 2nd edn., 1763).
[45] BL, OIOC, MS B383; 15 Mar. 1766.

plishment. Even when adverse comment had been justified, Margaret greatly resented its having been made:

Calcutta, 23 August 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> The Plowdens and Messink were here en famille last night. I did not expect him and was therefore not prepared to accompany him. Indeed, I have long given it up. However, I ventured to play the two mad songs with him, and avoided any material mistake. I was obliged to thin the chords a little in the recitative for fear of playing them wrong. I was totally out of practice. He took notice that I had forgot the recitative. It is very odd that he should always find out when he is ill accompanied and never when he is well.[46]

No professional musicians were present at informal occasions like the ones described above. At formal concert parties, their presence could provide double security for women accompanists, by covering up mistakes, or by taking the blame for any that could not be overlooked.

The ability to accompany was an important skill for women keyboard players, but their highest goal remained that of appearing as a soloist in the fashionable chamber repertoire of accompanied sonatas and concertos. To judge by the values of the circles in which she moved, Margaret eventually developed into a technically accomplished and stylish pianist. Yet in one area of critical importance to the soloist, she struggled in vain to master the necessary skills. The ability to impress the *cognoscenti* with improvisations at cadential points, in other words to be able to insert 'modulations', 'flourishes', or 'cadences' as Margaret variously terms them, was regarded as the ultimate benchmark of stylish playing. Her letters over several decades provide a most interesting commentary on her problems.

The cause of her difficulties with the improvised cadenza is easily identified: lack of knowledge of simple harmony. The technical aspects of musical language formed no part of a young woman's musical education, yet some understanding was obviously necessary in order to insert an improvisation, even one prepared beforehand, into a sonata or concerto. It is again instructive to examine Pasquali's *Thorough-Bass made Easy*. The manner in which the author explains figured bass avoids any reference to the term inversion, indeed to the concept itself. He first describes root position common chords, presented in different dispositions so as to avoid parallel fifths. Next he lists three chords 'played by applying the Common Chord of one Note to another Note, of which it is not a Common Chord'; these are the $\begin{smallmatrix}6\\4\\2\end{smallmatrix}$, the $\begin{smallmatrix}6\\4\end{smallmatrix}$, and the $\begin{smallmatrix}6\\3\end{smallmatrix}$. Then there are two chords which are played 'by adding another Note to the Common Chord'; these are the $\begin{smallmatrix}7\\5\\3\end{smallmatrix}$ and the $\begin{smallmatrix}6\\5\\3\end{smallmatrix}$. There is thus no mention of any harmonic connection between different inversions of chords, as described by Rameau. Despite the fact that Margaret owned other manuals such as Heck's, in which the concept of inversion is fully explained, she remained in lifelong ignorance of this vital element of harmony.[47]

46 Fowke MS E4, 285.

47 J. C. Heck, *Complete System of Harmony* (London, *c.*1768, 2nd edn. *c.*1780).

Margaret began her study of cadenzas, using Giordani's *Cadences for the Use of Young Practitioners* (London, *c.*1780). On many occasions, she had to have recourse to her brother for further elucidation, though the value of his assistance must remain deeply uncertain:

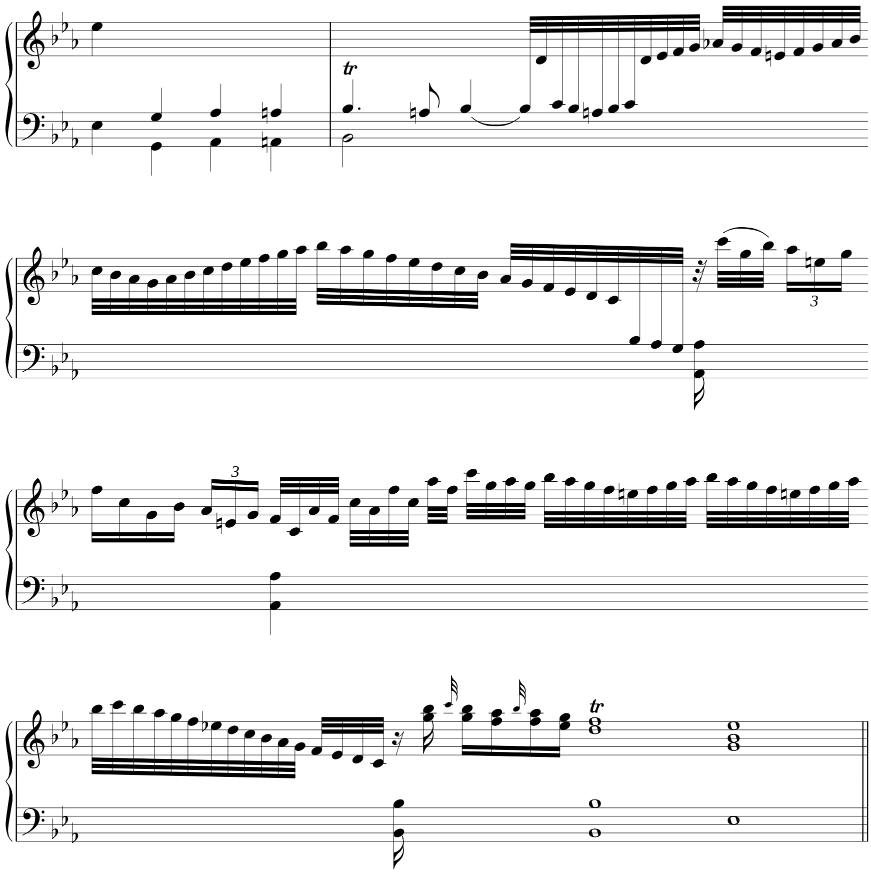
Calcutta, 5 May 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> Enclosed are two cadences which I have transposed and two which I have copied from Giordani. These you are to keep and I will from time to time send you more. They will furnish hints for more which I expect from your Genius. Send me some as soon as possible—I don't like to play Giordani's before musical people. Let yours be rather short for any common key but D 2 sharps as I shall not immediately have memory or courage to play long ones. I begin to make palpable attempts in this way, but I always lose myself. I likewise enclose some little extracts from some of my Concertos, and have marked the place ∧ where I wish to introduce my cadences. I beg the favor of you just to transpose the first few notes of any of the cadences I have sent you—*Mention the number*—and the key into which you mean to put it, and I will finish transposing it. You will see by this that I am at a loss how to introduce the cadence. Indeed that is now one of my greatest difficulties. In No. 1 for instance (Abel's concerto) it is plain that the cadence should be in E. That key introduces the subject quite agreeably to my ear, and you will observe that the little cadence which Abel himself has made and which I have underlined is in E (at least I conclude so as it has 3 flats).[48]

Giordani's *Cadences* are all $^{6}_{4}$ prolongations. One of his two E flat examples is typical of his approach—a short, easily memorized flourish (Ex. 2). Giordani was to remain a point of reference for Margaret throughout her life, but even at this stage she realized that it would not be sufficient to rely on the examples from a manual in public performance; some individuality was required. Her difficulty lay neither in transposing, nor in identifying suitable places for cadences, but in the actual insertion. By 5 June, she had made little progress: 'I am discouraged at my musical pursuits . . . I cannot gracefully ornament indifferent music; I cannot play much without a book; cadences and flourishes I am totally deficient in; Heavens! what ground I have yet to travel over.'[49] She wrote to her brother for some annotated examples of modulations: 'I would not willingly have them long, but let the imperfect chord be among them. I suppose you understand me? Give me three or four notes with figures over them to work upon.'[50] Francis did his best to reply to this vague request, but Margaret found his response totally baffling. Lack of familiarity with even the basic terminology of harmony, let alone the underlying concepts, turned this correspondence into a farce. Her first attempt to understand her brother's instructions ended in blissful oblivion: 'The next day I took my pencils, opened your instructions, and my books, and was determined to attack and conquer! When lo! I was fairly driven off the fields by the irresistible power of sleep.'[51] Her next attempt was scarcely more enlightening:

[48] Fowke MS E4, 87. [49] Fowke MS E4, 115.
[50] Fowke MS E4, 115. [51] Fowke MS E4, 204.

Ex. 2. Cadence in E flat, No. 7 (T. Giordani, *Cadences for the Use of Young Practitioners*, London, *c.*1780)



Calcutta, 12 July 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

The following day I devoted to modulation. I studied No. 1. I wrote a prelude upon that theme, and tho' there is certainly nothing original in it, yet I am very well pleased with it. I have played it over several times with some satisfaction. I shall enclose it in my next . . .

This morning after my airing I flew to my harpsichord, but was excessively mortified at not being able to make out No. 2. I do'nt understand it in the least. You have written a figure of 3 which I suppose is the sign of the common chord over B natural, C sharp and E, and to each of these you have marked imp:—I do not comprehend this at all, for is not the imperfect chord the three upper notes of the 7th of the 5th to the key note? Consequently, in the present theme, ought not the imperfect to consist of

> E. G. B., the three upper notes of the 7th of C which is the 5th to the key note? Having in vain attempted to make out this I have left it till I get a further explanation, but I shall not lose any time as I shall write from all the other themes you sent me. I return this theme to the imperfect chord that you may understand my objections. I shall be glad if you will recapitulate all the instructions you gave me concerning the keys before you went. It will be clearer upon paper than in my head, and I will immediately enter it into a very neat book, in which I write my themes, and the table of modulations in all the keys. I like your capricio and cadence very well. The latter ends very prettily. I shall introduce it in the first Concerto in f which I play.[52]

Margaret's problems with cadences were twofold; first, she had so little concept of harmony that it was difficult to make satisfactory joins between the improvised and written material; and secondly, lacking the ability to improvise unrehearsed, her aim was clearly to build up a collection of cadences for use in different keys which she could memorize, yet memory was a problem. In September 1783, she recounts a 'lost chord' experience:

Chinsura, 14 September 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> . . . during the whole time that my father's unreasonable opposition gave me such concern and vexation I never touched the harpsichord but once. It was one evening when I was more than usual unhappy. The harpsichord happened to be open. I sat down. My fingers of themselves went over it. I believe Grief inspired me, for I declare my little voluntary which was in the most solemn style touched me so much that I wish I could give it you now. I lost all recollection of it a few moments after I finished it. I have not a single note of it in my memory now![53]

During the course of her correspondence with her brother in 1783, Margaret Fowke often referred to keyboard music that she was studying or that she hoped to study. This provides an insight into a young English pianist's repertoire in the period immediately before tastes were radically changed by the advent of Haydn's music. Table 4 lists keyboard music that Margaret is known to have played that year, but not vocal music that she accompanied, nor music which is discussed, with no indication that she intended to perform it. Many of the volumes can be identified with reasonable certainty, either because specific details are given, or through a process of elimination. Not unexpectedly, almost all of Margaret's pieces were accompanied sonatas or concertos, but her range was relatively broad; it included two English composers (Avison and Butler), a woman composer (Maddalena Laura Lombardini), and of course the major figures active in London (J. C. Bach and Abel). Most of these works had been published during the previous two decades. In due course it will be possible to compare this with the music that she played after her return to London in the late 1780s. Taste was changing fast with the advent of Haydn, Pleyel, and Kozeluch, and by then her 1783 repertoire would have been considered distinctly old-fashioned.

Margaret Fowke's first encounter with the music of Haydn seems to have come in the spring of 1785. Several volumes of quartets had been imported into India in the

[52] Fowke MS E4, 205. [53] Fowke MS E4, 395.

Table 4. Margaret Fowke's piano repertoire in 1783

Composer named	Possible source(s)
Butler	Thomas Butler: *Six easy Sonatas for the Piano Forte, with an accompanyment for a violin* (London, *c.*1775)
Syrmen	Maddalena Laura Lombardini (afterwards Sirmen): *Six Concertos for the Harpsichord or Piano Forte (Op. 3) Adapted for the Harpsichord by Sigr Giordani . . . with Accompanyments* (London, 1773, 2nd edn. 1785)
Abel	Carl Friedrich Abel: *Six Concerts pour le Clavecin ou Piano Forte avec l'Accompagnement de deux Violins et Violoncelle* (London, 1774)
Rauzzini	Venazio Rauzzini: *Six Quartettos for the Piano Forte or Harpsichord with Accompaniments for two Violins and a Bass*, Op. 6 (London, 1780)
Piozzi	Gabriele Mario Piozzi: *Six Sonatas for the Harpsichord or Piano Forte, with an Accompanyment for a Violin*, Op. 2 (London, 1780); Op. 3 (London, *c.*1780); Op. 5 (London, 1781)
Giordani	Tommaso Giordani: *Six Concertos for the Piano-Forte, or Harpsichord* Op. 14 (London, *c.*1775)
Bach	Johann Christian Bach: *A Third Sett of Six Concertos for the Harpsichord, or Piano Forte, with Accompaniments for two Violins and a Bass, two Hautboys and two French Horns*, Op. 13 No. 4 (London, 1777)
Campioni	Carlo Antonio Campioni: *Six Sonatas for the Harpsichord* (London, 1763)
Nicolai	Valentino Nicolai: *Six Sonatas for the Piano Forte or Harpsichord, with a violin accompaniment*, Op. 3 (London, *c.*1775); Op. 5 (1780); *Six Trios* (London, *c.*1775)
Avison	Charles Avison: *Six Sonatas, for the Harpsichord, with Accompanyments for two Violins and a Violoncello*, Op. 8 (London, 1764)

mid-1770s; an inventory lists 'Haydn's six Quatuors in books', and 'Quartettors by Haydn and other Composers', a reflection of the modest London reception of the early string quartets.[54] But it was not until 1785, again following London taste closely, that much more significant quantities of Haydn's keyboard and chamber music began to enter India. The focus of interest was on piano trios and symphony arrangements. There is some reason to believe that the opening of Stone's music shop marked the first significant importation of the composer's music. The Fowkes soon became aware that this was a significant new taste. In March 1785, Sophia Plowden wrote to Margaret: 'Let me know if you have got Heydens Overture; it is an elegant composition and if you have not got it already I will send it you.'[55] The following month, her brother visited the shop: 'I have picked up at Stone's a good deal of Hayden's music adapted to the harpsichord, which Mr Bellows says is quite

[54] BL, OIOC, Bengal Inventories, 1774–6, P155/4.

[55] Fowke MS E5, 76.

the fashion, so you must get a good stock of it ready.'[56] The vogue for keyboard arrangements of Haydn symphonies was inspired by the success of 'L'Impériale' in London in 1781. From 1784, numerous keyboard editions were published, and it seems almost certain that some of these were shipped to India and then offered in Stone's shop. There was now clearly a market among the 'Ladies of India' for fashionable women's genres, such as the accompanied sonatas published by Forster, for example, *Three Sonatas for the Harpsichord or Piano-Forte with an Accompanyment for a Violin and Violoncello*, Op. 40 (London, 1785). Sir William Jones included a Haydn trio in a 'prescription' he compiled for a friend:

Calcutta, 11 May 1787 Sir William Jones to John Shore

> We are pretty well, and hope that you are now in good health. You will not (though you dislike medicine) object to my prescription:
> Take a concerto of Corelli,
> An air of Leo, or Pergolesi,
> —a trio of Haydn, etc Mixtura fiat.
> Would I could be as good a physician to you, as I am etc.[57]

Margaret Fowke became a discriminating admirer of Haydn's music, but the chasm that separated her musical tastes from those of her father remained unbridgeable.

The Young Singer

As part of their musical education, many young women studied singing. Margaret Fowke, who spent much time attempting to develop her voice, sensed that her vocal powers were inadequate, but this did not stop her from working hard at her exercises to prepare for an imaginary début in a prestigious musical soirée. To present oneself as a solo singer in this type of social setting required intensive preparation, and she embarked upon a programme of work in 1783. The ensuing struggle to make something of her voice makes painful reading. Frustration and embarrassment at the results of her efforts led eventually to a frank admission of defeat.

Margaret's ambition was to become what she called a 'ballad singer', and her audience was to consist of young men:

Calcutta, 3 May 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> Do you think I have any chance of becoming a ballad singer in the course of another year? I am ambitious of that honor. My vanity sometimes dreams pretty little pictures of partial friends and listening beaux feeling the power of my voice, but believe me *mon très cher* that my first and greatest delight will be to sing with you, and to please you. I am sure you think so, for thy P[eggy]'s affection is yet stronger than her vanity.[58]

[56] Fowke MS E7, 26.
[57] *The Letters of Sir William Jones*, ed. G. Cannon, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), ii. 736.
[58] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E4, 69.

To achieve success as a solo singer, two qualities would be required beyond those normally expected of the average domestic amateur, capable of taking part in a glee, but little more: a substantial vocal range and good powers of projection. The intention was to emulate something of the vocal power of the best professional singers. Lady Clive ambitiously reported that the voice of one of her daughters was 'not strained in imitation of Marà or Billington', but, more realistically, she concluded that, since it was 'put to no great exertions', her singing was likely to remain 'elegant, gentle and consoling'.[59] In high hopes, Margaret started to practise, but soon encountered a problem: the disturbance caused to other residents of the house. Clearly inhibited by the presence of her father, she complained: 'I should sing a great deal more but my father is continually at home . . . I sometimes take the opportunity of his sleeping hours, but I cannot throw out my voice as I ought.'[60] Furtive practice during the hours of siesta would not produce the desired increase in volume.

Margaret's attitudes to solo singing may be illustrated by her attempts to learn to sing the upper part of Purcell's 'Sing all ye Muses'. To familiarize herself with the piece, she first played through her part. Only then did she try to sing it, concluding that 'the upper part is all in the best part of my voice, and I think suits it as well as any thing I sing'.[61] Having thus convinced herself that the song suited her, she now began to practise vocal exercises with a view to training her ear:

Calcutta, 5 May 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> I cultivate my voice with great assiduity. I have performed your exercises five days running. I never will omit them but by necessity. I think my ear very correct, and yet any passage that I have not been able to sing right at first, I shall be almost afraid to sing not having your sanction.[62]

At this point, however, a new consideration seems to have struck her with some force—the possible impropriety of the words. She asked for guidance, stating that she would not 'sing a song unless it is perfectly in character and right'. Clearly she had begun to suspect that, with its themes of military valour and commerce, this was a song for men. A few days later, when asked by her father to sing the upper part, she declined because she could not sing the text 'without any embarrassment'.[63] Persistent bouts of ill health now began to disrupt her efforts. She complained that the 'fates' were conspiring to prevent her becoming a musician.

Margaret was now so lacking in confidence that she determined not to risk singing during her forthcoming visit to Lady Day. She observed too that her range appeared to be shrinking:

Calcutta, 19 June 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> My voice is so much gone, that I am afraid I shall not be able to sing with much effect there. Indeed I imagine I shall not sing at all; the practice would be very inconsiderable,

59 BL, OIOC, Photo Eur 287; 22 Jan. 1803.
60 Fowke MS E4, 78.
61 Ibid.
62 Fowke MS E4, 84.
63 Fowke MS E4, 98.

and I do not like to have my *voce* run down in two sets . . . I have practised very little for a month past, but yet I have generally sung a *little* every day. I have met with a great mortification. My voice which extended to exceed even the bounds of the Clavecin, is lowered three notes—C natural is absolutely the highest good fair note that I can sound, and that has been the case for several days together . . .[64]

In the event she did try a few songs, but was crushed by the indifference (perceived or real) with which her attempts were received:

Calcutta, 2 July 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

I was tempted a day or two after I came here to sing a song. I believe I was rather imprudent as I have been so much out of practice. It was 'Oh could you bear to view'. *A mon avis* I sung it passably, and accompanied it well. The flattering Sir John was in his writing room; he passed over my performance in perfect silence. Lady Day was at the end of the hall working—not a word of applause even from her partial tongue. Another day I ventured to sing 'Ah what avails'—the same mortifying neglect attended me in this performance. This discourages me greatly, however finding this not a good opportunity of introducing my *voce*, I have given it up. I certainly have not half my powers at present. Now that I am recovering my strength, I lament the days that pass without any practice—for I have no opportunities in this house . . .[65]

This was not at all how Sir John and Lady Day were supposed to behave. An altogether more acceptable response from a fictional 'Sir John' was described by Jane Austen in *Sense and Sensibility*:

Marianne's performance was highly applauded. Sir John was loud in his admiration at the end of every song, and as loud in his conversation with the others while every song lasted. Lady Middleton frequently called him to order, wondered how any one's attention could be diverted from music for a moment, and asked Marianne to sing a particular song which Marianne had just finished.

Margaret put down the weakness of her voice to persistent illness. On one occasion she complained that no sooner did her voice begin to sound 'fine and clear' than 'lingering illness' returned to destroy its tone. On another she wrote of 'the oppression upon my lungs', which prevented her doing her vocal exercises.[66] Singing in public was so much less stressful for men. An unfortunate failure in tone could simply be laughed off. Writing from Benares, Francis Fowke reported an attempt to sing the 'Demon's Song' by Mr Ives: 'his voice is so little calculated to express the solemn deep tones from the shades below, that he himself joined in our laugh against him for the fruitless attempt.'[67]

There is no need to continue with the tale of Margaret's failure. She started upon another period of intensive vocal practice during her journey up to Benares, encouraged this time, not by the thought of public performance, but by the prospects of singing duets and glees with her brother. The themes remain as before—the frustrations of practice interrupted by the proximity of others, illness, and lack of self-

[64] Fowke MS E4, 119. [65] Fowke MS E4, 163. [66] Fowke MS E4, 224.
[67] Fowke MS E7, 22; 22 Aug. 1784.

confidence. By the time that she returned to England, the prospect of her achieving anything worthwhile as a solo singer had faded. In a formal letter of renunciation she gave up any thoughts of becoming a solo singer:

Staffhausen, 30 August 1788 Margaret Benn to Francis Fowke

> The *voce* alas! is dead. Oh lament the fate of your own offspring, often thro' timidity, despair, and weakness it drooped and wished to die, when your treacherous cares revived it and promised it should live to fame and honor! I too won by your eloquence, was induced to extend my cares to rear it. Even when sickness had almost robbed me of strength to support myself, how patiently I submitted to a painful and tedious course of exertions! At length our cares seemed rewarded and my ear fancied charming sounds, and the *voce* seemed to command the enchanting powers of melody and harmony. I loved it so passionately that I thought no sneer, no frown should ever induce me to forsake it, but how omnipotent as you say is the public. After a painful struggle I have given it up—withdrawn my cares, when the voce awake now to the joys of life pleaded some excellencies which even prejudice could not deny it, and begged that I would yet bear something more in its favor, I saw my favorite perish only because I had no strength to save it.[68]

The perils of studying to become a society singer in a culture of unalloyed flattery are all too obvious, but Margaret was far too level-headed and musically perceptive to be misled about her true level of vocal ability. She rather aptly characterized her voice as a 'hot-bed voice' which 'deprived of its artificial nourishment . . . must die'. She still regarded the defeat as a significant one, cherishing 'the most tender affection' for her voice's memory.

At the root of Margaret's lack of self-confidence in her abilities as a singer lay her own musicality, which afforded her a clear perception of her own weaknesses. It seems to have been a virtue shared by few 'society' singers in Calcutta. In so small a pond, musical minnows could present themselves to their admiring public without fear of reproach, while remaining unaware of the fierce excoriations of their paltry efforts put about by gossips behind their backs, or expressed in the secrecy of private correspondence. Several times in her letters, Margaret expresses concern that her voice might be 'run down' by the gossips of Calcutta society, and it was far from a groundless fear. The Fowke correspondence contains many barbed comments about the performances of both men and women, instrumentalists and vocalists alike, but it was nearly always women singers who attracted the fiercest put-downs. Margaret considered that Mrs Hyde's voice was 'much gone' and that she had 'lost tone as well as tune'.[69] Joseph thought she had 'not a single perfection left' and that there were 'plenty of discords indeed'.[70] Of Lady Chambers, he wrote: 'She does not appear to me to be deficient in her Ear, but she cannot command her Voice to execute her own purposes.'[71] Francis had heard so many people 'execrate' her voice that he was not expecting to find any improvement in her singing. He attributed her

[68] BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/31, 124.
[69] Fowke MS E4, 193.
[70] Fowke MS E5, 53.
[71] Ibid.

success in one piece to the accompanist's fingers, rather than 'her ladyship's throat' and bemoaned the fact that 'such a deception should be feasible'.[72] What was required was self-confidence and a very thick skin, neither of which attributes Margaret possessed.

The Domestic Concert Party

The domestic concert party remains among the least studied aspects of musical life in eighteenth-century English society. There are few sources of evidence other than journals and private correspondence. High-society private concerts were sometimes advertised and even reviewed in the press, but the world of middle-class, domestic music-making remains very difficult to penetrate. Very little indeed is known about the way in which informal small-scale 'concerts' in the home were run, either socially or musically, yet these were the occasions upon which aspiring young musicians like Margaret Fowke routinely presented their efforts for appraisal.

The term 'private' concert is a broad one, which embraces many different kinds of occasion.[73] Three distinct types were prevalent in Calcutta.

High-Society Private Concerts. These were events to which invitations were greatly prized. Relatively few in number and large in scale, they were usually held under the patronage of an influential society figure. In Calcutta, it was accepted practice for the governor to organize concerts and balls for the purpose of introducing new arrivals. It is clear from Margaret Fowke's account of one such event that she felt herself to have been slighted on her first introduction to Warren Hastings. His coolness towards her stemmed from the fact that Joseph Fowke had sided with his political opponents, the 'hostile majority' on the Council. Feelings were still running very high:

near Calcutta, 18 December 1776 Margaret Fowke to John Walsh

> Parties run very high in this place. The half of the settlement will scarcely speak to the other. It is a Custom when any Ladies arrive in Calcutta for the Governour either to pay a formal visit or leave his card for them and afterwards invite them to his Balls, Concerts etc. Mr Hastings omitted this ceremony to me, and when I have met him in publick he has gone and made his bow to every Lady as they sat, and passed me . . . After I had been here three months, he invited me to his Concert, and said that he was before entirely ignorant of my arrival, tho' when Europe ships come in the new Ladies are the sole topic of conversation.[74]

[72] Fowke MS E7, 23.

[73] Morrow has usefully defined six categories with reference to musical life in Vienna: (1) spontaneous social music; (2) the more formalized after-dinner entertainment; (3) special parties and celebrations including musical performances; (4) participatory chamber music; (5) gala occasions with elaborate productions; (6) musical salons, or regular formal concerts. M. S. Morrow, *Concert Life in Haydn's Vienna: Aspects of a Developing Musical and Social Institution* (Pendragon Press: New York, 1989).

[74] BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/10.

The courtesy call, followed by an invitation to a concert or ball, represented a formal acknowledgement, without which entrée into fashionable Calcutta might be difficult. Little is known of the growth of these fashionable concerts in Calcutta in the 1760s and 1770s. Alexander McCrabie recorded brief details of a few such evenings. He was of the opinion that Hastings put on so many of these concerts that they were becoming 'insipid'.[75] The leading promoters of private concerts were Mrs Clavering and Mrs Hyde:

> Mrs Claverings Party—a Splendid Concert—Platell & all the Catch Singers besides Violonchello, Fiddles & Flutes and Miss Claverings on the Harpsichord. Charlotte would sing well if she had a good Master. She begins too high always, and cannot manage her Voice. Did I ever tell you how divinely Mrs Hyde sings—Tis seducing, bewitching, a very Syren[76]

These 'private' society concerts, the direct precursors of the first 'public' concert series, revolved firmly around the personality of the hostess.

Domestic Soirées. These were much more numerous, less brilliant and smaller in scale, though the organization was still formal, with invitations, a prepared music list and such professional support as was available and affordable.

Spontaneous Musical Performances. In essence these were the result of unplanned gatherings of musical friends—soirées without formal organization.

In Anglo-Indian society, it was the second of these categories, the domestic soirée, that occupied a position of pivotal importance. On the one hand, it provided a periodic formal setting for the daily activities of practice and sessions with friends; on the other, in its social and musical organization it sought to emulate the grander high-society private concert. Above all, the domestic concert acted as a focal point for the activities of women musicians. There were some economic constraints. McVeigh cites the annoyance of a philistine husband over the cost of his wife's weekly concerts: 'The expense of this whim is monstrous, for not one of these people will open their mouths, or rosin a single string, without being very well paid for it.'[77] Several times there are comments in the Fowke correspondence which suggest that the frequency and scale of their private musical entertainments were putting pressure on their finances.

Descriptions of a series of soirées in the Fowke household during the spring and summer of 1783 are to be found in Margaret's correspondence with her brother. She is a good witness, precisely because she made no attempt to hide her own feelings about people. On one occasion, her father, alarmed by her candour, felt obliged to caution her about the dangers of private letters falling into the wrong hands. She was as interested in the organization, conduct, and social setting of her musical evenings as she was in the music itself. What follows are some extracts from her letters in chronological order.

[75] BL, OIOC, Francis MS E15; 9 Feb. 1776.

[76] Francis MS E15; 17 Nov. 1775.

[77] McVeigh, *Concert Life in London*, 55.

Calcutta, 25 April 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> The party invited were the Plowdens, Messink, Golding, the Moores, Macam, Elliot, Seton, Shore and Harding—the two latter did not come. Shore has offended me much by not paying his devoirs to me. He sent a written answer that he would come, and as he did not I conclude he forgot it—which is a crime. I am in an ill humor with him. You taught me to like him, and his impertinent *Aiedeur* makes me now hate him—Scelerat! I accompanied Messink in 'Mad Bess' and 'Genius of England', not very well in the former. As I allow that, I suppose Messink thought it detestable. In the latter I succeeded pretty well—it is a very good harpsichord song; the accompaniment and symphony sound full and sprightly. I attempted to accompany Golding in 'Honour and Arms', which if I were perfect would sound delightfully upon the harpsichord. The symphony is so grand and full, that when I play it a whole band vibrates upon my ear. We managed this so ill that we broke of in the middle. This was partly Golding's fault, for there are some passages in it, quick divisions of the voice, to which I meant to give no other accompanyment than chords, but the lazy fellow had been accustomed to have the violin run these divisions with him and when I gave him so little assistance, stopped short. I attempted it again, tried to run these divisions with him, but as the song is set in the bass cliff, the passage not very easy, and I much embarassed, to my great concern I broke off. Golding would neither allow himself or me to be in fault but laid it to the harpsichord with a frying pan stop, and said so much against it, that the whole company united in abusing it, and the singers were not in a humour to sing to it. The supper was late, the company out of spirits, the wind tho' at night blew scorching hot. In short the Demon of ennui, heat and discord took possession of the P.'s dominions and reigned in them triumphantly. After supper I don't know how the rest of the company fared, but Macam and I who sat together were very merry. Messink, Golding and Playdell sung one or two glees, and the company broke up.[78]

Margaret obviously regarded the evening as a modest success, the breakdown in the Handel notwithstanding, and she immediately put in train arrangements for another:

Tomorrow I have made another party—the Days, Williams's, Birch, Messink who is to come early and practise with me, Kirkpatrick and cousin, Collins, Playdell, and Golding. My father upon these two occasions has left me to make the list. I intend to have little parties very frequently, if I can manage them better.[79]

Conscious of the problems which had marred her first party, she decided to hire professional musicians:

I sent a note to McArthur yesterday with orders to attend, and bring Vincent and Diehle. They brought word he was out and left it with the Durwan. This morning I sent to know if he had received it; they returned the note and sent word he was very ill—too ill to receive any notes. I am truly concerned for this worthy obliging fellow and can't help having some

[78] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E4, 38. Harding was perhaps the paymaster mentioned by Hickey. J. P. Losty, *Calcutta: City of Palaces* (London: British Library, 1990), 57.

[79] Captain Collins was perhaps the military storekeeper; the other man could have been Captain William Kirkpatrick. Losty, *Calcutta: City of Palaces*, 63–4.

apprehensions for him, as the season has been such a fatal one. The Portuguese will be here, and I hope Diehle.[80]

At this point her letter was interrupted. She rushed off to practise the accompaniment of the Purcell song which she had arranged to perform with Messink. She also selected two solo harpsichord pieces by Maddalena Laura Sirmen and Thomas Butler to play herself. In the event this preparation came to nought, because she was unable to rehearse with the singer, and when faced with an audience, she could not pluck up the courage to play her solos either:

Calcutta, 26 April 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

I neither played Butler or Syrmen, or accompanied the Messino [Messink] in Purcel. He was prevented by business from coming early, and I by musical fear from playing among so many connoisseurs, for I have little music here and am much out of practice. This shall not be the case long. It is foolish to say one will do any thing; even in these little trifles Fortune contrives things somehow or other, that we may act quite differently from our first intentions. I have twenty times practised songs and pieces with a view of playing them upon some particular occasion, and have always been thrown out, and been obliged to play something which I have imagined I executed ill.

The evening was a very agreeable one. Mrs Williams really seems a good natured woman. I placed a card table at the head of the stairs and they began early. In the hall I made Diehle and the two *youths of genius* V. and Emanuel play trios—Pergolesi, and Lampugnani's which are in my father's collection. Afterwards Playdell sung 2 of Jacksons: 'Let me approach my sleeping love' and 'Ye shepherds give ear to my lay'. He sung them very pleasingly. His voice improves much, or rather, I suppose he was out of practise before. Messink and he sung 'Sad is my day'—not so well as the P. and he would have sung it. To conclude, Golding sung 'Honor and arms' and Messink 'Let me wander'. I played the chords to all these performances. After supper we had 'When gay Bacchis' at my request, as I thought it would be striking [and] 'Amaryllis' (ah frère!). Birch took thy part, Messink did not offer me the first—Scelerat!—'You ask me dear Jack' which sounded delightfully. Playdell's voice quite striking. I believe these glee singers would like to come here often, if they would learn a few more things. But Messink is easily disgusted with what he has sung often, and yet, notwithstanding the club, they do not enlarge their stock much. I heartily hope Playdell means to join you. Sir Iashtin [a nickname?] sang Rule Brettania—I joined the chorus in altissimo, but I was so frightened that my voice was nothing—I hope I was in strict tune. Messink asked me to sing a glee, but I am so much out of practise that I declined it. I think notwithstanding that, I shall soon introduce the *voce,* but I must recover my lost ground first. After the company broke up I could not help detaining the glee singers for one more glee—which was 'soft cupid'; they sung it very tolerably. We were all in good spirits and would willingly have sat on longer, but I thought G. [Joseph Fowke] would be impatient, so I retired. I have thoughts of enlisting Lady C's sentimental beau—his musical talents will render him every way a great acquisition, but I am afraid when your belles return, I shall lose him again.[81]

[80] Fowke MS E4, 46. [81] Fowke MS E4, 50.

The following week, Margaret records briefly details of her third soirée. This was a smaller affair because several of the invited guests failed to turn up, much to her annoyance:

Calcutta, 3 May 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> We had a little party here last night, the Days, Hays and Williams's. I had the violins and Diehle. Messink sent an excuse; Golding neither came or sent one. Shore did not appear either—I have not seen him since you went away, and am in a very ill humour with him. I intend to take no more notice of him. Playdell sung a song in Acis and Galatea perfectly well—I can't recollect the words. I accompanied him exactly right tho' at sight, and the bass is a very pretty one to. I mention this in praise of my good luck not my skill, for it happened to be a very easy one. I never decline accompanying Playdell in any thing, for as I have the other instruments and the words before me, it is impossible that I can do anything to disturb the harmony. Playdell has certainly not so fine a voice as Messink, but he has so much animation and expression that I hear him with real pleasure. He is never capricious or troublesome like Mr P, but sings as if he thought the accomplishment a trifle in which he took pleasure. He goes in a few days.[82]

There is little doubt that Margaret's motives in organizing this series of soirées were by no means only musical; there was also the all-absorbing question of whether she could attract 'beaux' to her house. She had dreams of captivating them with her voice.[83] The reality was rather less palatable; as yet, the desired young men seemed unaccountably reluctant to come: 'I have had three parties and *ailleurs* the esteemed beaux forsake my gate.'[84] She had little choice but to keep trying. Margaret's fullest description of a musical soirée was inspired by the embarrassment of a thoroughly humiliating experience, to which MacArthur contributed in no small measure:

Calcutta, 18 May 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> The night before last for instance I had a little musical party. I was bent upon shining in one piece of Rauzzini, which you have heard me play, and two concertos of Abel. The latter depend entirely upon a brilliant execution, which I have never courage even to aim at unless I am quite sure of the passages. Inspired by vanity I rose early, determined to conquer them, to be *au fait* in some flourishes . . .
>
> This little party went of passably. Mrs Plowden and Miss Smith who is on a visit there were the ladies—Crisp, Gordon, Macam, Elliot, Messink and Birch, the gentlemen. That idle fellow Golding *à l'ordinance* neither came or sent an excuse. No glees of course—greatly to my mortification. The music was not well conducted. My Father intended that McArthur should have played two of Tartini's concertos. Thinking that these, Messink's songs, a few quartets, and my own pieces would be sufficient, I made no list. All confusion in consequence. McArthur would not play the quartets. Seeing that Gordon and Crisp had brought their violins he said there were too many instruments. A Concerto of Avison's was in consequence miserably performed. A long delay succeeded. Out of all patience and said I would play the harpsichord. Rauzzini's Quartetto was the piece. McArthur made a capital mistake in the accompaniment, returned

[82] Fowke MS E4, 67. [83] Fowke MS E4, 68. [84] Fowke MS E4, 79.

to the wrong place after the first part was finished. I abruptly broke off, and told the violins they were all wrong. Mc. was in an obstinate humour and maintained they were right. I told him I would begin my solo again. He played a different part again. I was obliged to break off a second time. The obstinate fellow still maintained we were right. I a third time took up the solo part, and we were together the rest of the piece. He acknowledged his blunder the next day, which he said was owing to his being confused. If you recollect the piece you will find out how it happened. Rauzzini has made two divisions in the first part, the first for the tutti parts, the second for the solo, which is rather an unusual way of marking music. The solo only is meant to be repeated but McArthur repeatedly returned to the beginning. Messink sung 'Let me wander', 'Genius of England' and 'Comfort ye my people'. He likewise sung a long recitative before 'Genius of England'. The instruments and voice not together thro' the whole of it. I cannot account for the little desire Messink seems to have of being accompanied by me. For tho' I have always accompanied him to a very great disadvantage, from the incorrectness of the writing and the novelty at that time of Purcel's style to me, yet if my vanity does not deceive me, I have generally followed him with tolerable success, and better than other instruments do. However, *n'importe* . . .

The accompaniment of Genius of England happened to be incorrectly marked, in consequence of which McArthur did not repeat 'Guard from her foes' but was going on to 'Come follow brave boys', when Messink turned round with a face so enraged, and sung the word *Guard* (to mark the return to that part) with such a fortissimo voice that it set everybody laughing that saw it. We ladies happened luckily to be sitting behind, so that we only saw his enraged aspect when he turned it round to McArthur. Indeed it threw me into a violent fit of laughing, which I was apprehensive he would hear tho' he could not see, especially as by the force of sympathy, I was in danger of being joined in full chorus by Plowden, Birch, Miss S. and Mrs P. who were sitting near me.[85]

The relationship between Margaret and MacArthur never really recovered from this débâcle. In an unfortunately incomplete description of her next party she continued to excoriate the thick-skinned musician:

Calcutta, 13 June 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

The Concert was a pretty good one. G. [Joseph Fowke] played the first part of the evening. Afterwards they followed my list which was of modern overtures—they certainly are the best calculated to please . . . Bach's overtures are animated. I played Piozzi in compliment to Mrs Hay who was of the party, and our two pieces of Butler—Mrs Hay is fond of Butler. Mrs Hyde plays and likes him, so the *modest young man* begins to have a few admirers. I cannot help being out of humour with McArthur every concert. He is always surly, and never shews the least . . . [incomplete][86]

Early in July, Margaret received an invitation to a soirée at the home of Lady Day where she had recently been staying:

Calcutta, 7 July 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

I am going this evening to the Days. The Hays, Staffords, Williams's and Hydes are to be of the party. This is an entertainment given in compliment to General Carnac and

85 Fowke MS E4, 99.

86 Fowke MS E4, 116.

Mrs Hyde and I are to exert our different musical powers to please him. You know he has been accustomed to attentions from the 'fairest of the fair'.

All the party was at the Day's which I mentioned to you yesterday—a very dull evening notwithstanding. Mrs Hyde's voice is much gone; I think she has lost tone as well as tune. She sung two or three of Jackson's and a new air of Tenducci's which is much admired in England at present. It is in the style of Scotch music—a lamentation supposed to be sung by the beautiful Mary during her confinement in England. The air has some solemnity and delicacy, but I think it must owe a great deal to the expression which Tenducci gives it to be so much admired . . .[87]

On 30 July, Joseph, who for some time past had not been active in the organization of these musical evenings, decided to take the initiative. Margaret, however, did not approve of his choice of guests:

Calcutta, 30 July 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

A few nights ago my father gave a concert in compliment to Mrs MacLellan. I had been much indisposed for two or three days before and all that day I had neither eat or drank. Notwithstanding that, I sat up. Lady Day and Mrs MacLellan were the only Ladies; Harding (I was angry with him for thinking Mrs. M. pretty), Tom Law, Barlowe, Collins, Kirkpatrick, and all the witches in Macbeth were the beaux. That divine music was to have been sung, but Golding's and MacArthur's illness prevented it. Messink sung a new song out of the Messiah—a trumpet song. It is very animated tho' it wants the accompaniment of that instrument.[88]

She intervened in a second evening arranged by Joseph, again to liven up the guest list:

Calcutta, 8 August 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

We had some music here last night—a party of G's forming not of mine. He intended it to have been a practising party for Mrs P. but having found those parties bores on two or three occasions I invited the Plowdens, Macam and Elliot and the party was a tolerable one.[89]

Shortly before her departure to Benares, Margaret described one final evening of music:

Calcutta, 19 August 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

This evening we are to have the concert I told you of. The Hays are invited besides those I mentioned before. As I am determined to play music which my hearers shall know is pretty without being told so, I intend playing Giordani with 'My lodging is on the cold ground' and Bach's concerto with 'The yellow haired laddie'. It is certainly a most enchanting air, but one of the variations upon it is quite childish. Ladd is to be here to accompany Messink in 'Mad Bess' and 'Rosy bowers' which we have not had a great while. I believe I shall have time to play another piece which is a lesson of Bach's in a very simple style, with a single accompaniment and a very elegant minuet after it—

[87] Fowke MS E4, 188. [88] Fowke MS E4, 223. [89] Fowke MS E4, 239.

> you may possibly remember it by this description. I shall not be dressed in a riding habit, but in a plain white muslin gown, with grass green ribons . . .
>
> The concert did not go off well last night. My father played a great deal of old music before we had any vocal. Ladd accompanied Messink in 'Rosy bowers' and 'Let the dreadful engines'. I cannot say, tho' I had a great prepossession in favour of Ladd's performance from its having pleased you, that I was satisfied with it. Messink is the most whimsical man I ever knew . . . I asked him to favor us with another song. He said it was impossible to so bad a harpsicord, that it was two notes below the pitch. In vain I assured him that it was only half a note. It was impossible to convince him but that it was one note at least. I could not play either of the pieces I intended. The Ladies made me play Campioni and the old jig piece of Nicolai. I can't play Nicolai well now because I am tired of it. The rain which was very violent took away the tone of my harpsicord entirely. Every lady was very attentive notwithstanding. I told Mr P. that violent rain would affect the finest harpsicord in the world, but he is a Gabrielli and disdained conviction.[90]

The typical guest-list for a Fowke concert party can be established from the five evenings for which Margaret provides fairly full information. Excluding those who were sent invitations but did not turn up, there were usually around ten to twelve guests, a mixture of married couples and single men. At the first two parties there were two married couples and eight single men. The presence on one occasion of a single unmarried woman seems to have been somewhat fortuitous—she was staying with one of the couples invited. The absence of young women is largely explained by the imbalance between the sexes in late eighteenth-century Calcutta, a deplorable feature of Anglo-Indian society that remained long in the memory. Years later, her brother attended a function at Epsom, which reminded him 'a little of India, for at the Ball the beaux far outnumbered the ladies'.[91] Yet there are also occasional hints that Margaret was deliberately excluding potential competition.

A total of some twenty-five individuals received invitations to concert parties between April and August 1783, and at least as many again were potential musical guests, men and women friendly with the family, whose names are mentioned in musical contexts, usually as lenders and borrowers of instruments. The basic organizational unit of musical amateurs may be termed the *musical circle*, defined as the musical members of a household, together with their regular guests. At the core of the Fowke circle at this period were the three singers from the Calcutta Catch Club, Messink, Golding, and Playdell. Each such group, however, was also part of a much wider network of musical circles through which it was possible to come in contact with considerable numbers of like-minded enthusiasts. Margaret Fowke was a regular guest in the Day and Plowden households.

In rural English society, networks of musical circles were probably quite static in character, with groups playing together over long periods and membership changing only slowly. Calcutta could not have been more different. Fed by constant arrivals and departures for Europe, and with a considerable traffic with inland areas, the population of the city was in a state of constant flux. Musical circles thus flour-

[90] Fowke MS E4, 262. [91] BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/26, 121.

ished and declined in a characteristically cyclical pattern. Fortuitous events could result in the complete demise of a hitherto well-established circle. This is what seems to have happened to the Fowkes. In the last months of 1783, Playdell left for Benares, Messink for China, while MacArthur, the group's favoured professional, had had enough. In such circumstances, the flexibility of belonging to a network of overlapping musical circles was of real value. Since entrance into one circle would usually lead to invitations into others, congenial groupings could be re-formed and replacements found quickly. After the departure of his daughter for Benares, and the losses to his musical circle mentioned above, Joseph had to endure a period of unwelcome musical isolation. This need not have lasted long, but he was a quarrelsome, combative figure, who evidently found it hard to mix. By early 1784, he was complaining bitterly about the dearth of music-making in Calcutta:

> The Society of Bengal appears to me to be growing worse and worse every day. Sir Will^{m} Jones and his Lady decline all supper invitations. MacArthur and Messink leave us in about a month. Our Plays are gone, our Musick is gone. Our fellowship is gone. People's straitened circumstances keep every man almost under his own roof.[92]

There was an unusually large exodus from the city at this period, but in fact there is no objective evidence to support his perception of a sudden dearth of music-making in Calcutta. It was admittedly out of season for the public concert, but private concerts continued unabated. Joseph, it seems, was experiencing the temporary results of the demise of a hitherto rather active musical circle. A year later he had re-established his social life.

One feature, characteristic of Anglo-Indian society and probably of all colonial societies at this period, is the amount of interaction between distant musical circles. The pattern of contact was determined by the geographical range and political infrastructure of the East India Company, which was then in the process of establishing a chain of residencies and military settlements, to link the kingdom of Oudh with Calcutta. Although physically far-flung, the community was in other senses a close-knit one, and musical amateurs were well aware of the wider picture. It was known who was being posted inland and who was returning to Calcutta, and there was much gossip as to what music or instruments new arrivals might bring with them, and what their musical tastes and capabilities might be. One result was the kind of 'if only' mentality, very evident in Margaret's letters. She often speculates how good a musical party of her acquaintances might have been, if only Mr 'X' had arrived before the departure of Mr 'Y'. This type of interaction over a wide geographical area facilitated the speedy promulgation of new tastes. It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking of the kingdom of Oudh and the northern frontier regions of India as distant outposts of empire, culturally remote from the life of Calcutta, let alone London. In reality, the mobility of Anglo-Indians counteracted the geographical remoteness of their activities, with the result that London taste (after a short delay) permeated the remotest corners of the Indian Empire. The small English commu-

[92] Fowke MS E5, 12; 12 Dec. 1783.

nities on the banks of the Ganges up to Benares and beyond reflected changes of taste, such as the replacement of the harpsichord by the pianoforte, or the various phases in the reception of Haydn's music.

Domestic soirées in India were nearly always arranged for the evening. This was partly done to avoid the intolerable heat of the middle of the day, but its main purpose was to ensure the attendance of men, most of whom could expect to be occupied with Company business earlier in the day. Once invitations had been sent out and replies received, the organizer could start to make the arrangements. First, it was necessary to draw up the 'list', as it was usually termed, which is perhaps best defined as the provisional programme order. An organizer needed to balance what was on offer from the various participants with what was known of the general tastes of the company. In effect, the list established the broad outlines of the evening's entertainment, leaving the detail flexible, to allow for last-minute withdrawals, substitutions, or additions. It was therefore written down by the organizer, but not circulated generally. Without one, chaos was not just possible but, in the Fowke household at least, likely. Once the content of a programme had been broadly settled, professional musicians could be hired. The basic requirement was for string players to supplement the efforts of gentlemen violinists, and sometimes there was also a call for a harpsichordist, for continuo work too challenging for women amateurs, or sight-reading.

With up to ten to twelve invited guests, three to four musicians, and the residents of the house, a Fowke soirée typically consisted of about twenty people. The size of the largest room in the residence did not necessarily restrict the numbers that could be invited. Guests were clearly free to move around from room to room during the course of the evening. If they wished to pay attention to a particular performer or piece of music, they could sit where the music was taking place; if they wished to sit at a card table set up in the hall, or take the air on the veranda, they could do so, while still being able to hear the music in the background. This informal concept of audience and concert meant that the private party could take place in more comfortable physical circumstances than was possible for public events, and even those with a modest residence could arrange an evening's entertainment.

One particular problem faced by the host of a concert party was rehearsal time. There was no difficulty in hiring professional musicians for a run through; they were usually available to come, often eager for the work, while women had an abundance of time. The problem lay with the male amateurs, whose work commitments often prevented them attending an agreed rehearsal time, usually an hour or so before the party was due to begin. Lack of rehearsal was an important cause of breakdown. Individual ineptitude was of course a major factor, but if an ensemble had been unable to rehearse, misunderstandings about repeat signs could cause trouble. A mistake in the original might only become apparent during performance. The cause of the amusing débâcle in Purcells's 'Genius of England' is there for all to see in *Orpheus Britannicus* where a second-time bar is missing. The problematic Rauzzini piece might well have been the second movement of his Quartet No. 3, in which the

𝄋 sign in the piano part is over the first double bar, whereas in the violin part (marked 'Da capo') it is at the start.

The musical soirée was universally viewed as an occasion for social intercourse, a function it shared with the dance and the card party. The social aspects of her entertainments are beautifully captured in Margaret's letters, and she reveals how easily the musical and social aspirations of the participants could come into conflict. To help clarify the nature of these tensions, it might be useful to present the social and musical hierarchy of the domestic soirée in descending order of importance (to the occasion) of the participants:

i (*central*)	ii	iii	iv (*peripheral*)
Social Organization			
unmarried women			
	unmarried men		
		married couples, and single men and women, past the usual age of matrimony	
			professional musicians
Musical Organization			
keen amateurs			
	professional musicians		
		less active amateurs, typically those able merely to contribute a 'party piece'	
			non-performers, those unable to perform, and ex-performers, including many married women

As thus described, the domestic concert party in Calcutta functioned as an informal marriage bureau, with young unmarried women the undisputed focus of attention. The most active English marriage markets were to be found in spa towns like Bath, where social etiquette at Pump Room functions was carefully ordered to ensure the smooth progress of courtships. Concerts had their place; they were where couples could be 'seen' together.[93] With its growing reputation as a place where great wealth could be acquired, it is hardly surprising that unmarried women were beginning to regard India as a productive place to go for an advantageous match.

In identifying musical accomplishment as a desirable attribute for any young

[93] P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 243–6.

woman in search of a partner, courtesy manuals were for once exactly in tune with the popular perception. The skilled execution and good taste of the young 'belle' were of course to be 'noticed' by the 'beau', but it was not necessary for him to have musical talent. If he possessed some musical ability, so much the better: his singing or playing could be accompanied by the woman, or, still better, an intimate glee group formed. Since her concert parties provided the best chance for her to meet with young men, her fury every time an invited man failed to turn up is understandable. To be stood up in Calcutta, with its shortage of unmarried women, was doubly mortifying. In order to drum up support for her own soirées, she had to endure the tedium of return visits to a card set: 'I set off with a heavy heart, for there is no bearing such evenings—I should generally excuse myself, but I am obliged to behave well to this card set, that I may have it in my power to engage them here.'[94] After another evening of stultifying boredom, she wrote: 'They meet here like so many gamesters at a tavern, and pay me no more attention than if I were a fixture in the house.'[95] The sense of urgency in Margaret's attempts to organize concert parties had much to do with her age; she was 25 and clearly felt that she had only limited time left to find a husband.[96] There were male admirers, but as yet none to her taste. In an undated note to her brother, one of them wrote of his attraction, bringing forth a sarcastic annotation from the agent responsible for forwarding his mail:

Calcutta, *c*.1784 C. Crawford to Francis Fowke

> I hope Miss Fowke is by this time able to come out, and to charm you all once more at the Harpsichord . . . Oh Lord! Oh Lord! Miss Fowke at the Harpsichord and I not there! [J. P. Wade adds: Has the object of their enquiries no charms but at the Harpsichord?][97]

That young women should be allowed to shine musically at their parties, free from 'competition', was well understood by married women. To allow the single hostess to display her musical talents to best effect, some reticence was necessary on their part, especially during the formal part of the evening. It is noticeable that not one of the married women invited to Margaret's musical evenings took part during that stage of the evening. Mrs Plowden, Mrs Hyde, and Lady Chambers, all active amateur performers and friends of the Fowkes, seem to have gone out of their way to avoid placing themselves in a position where any comparison could be made.

Given that the domestic musical soirée had so clear a social purpose, it is instructive to consider the extent to which its musical organization contributed to this end. Control of the 'list' gave the woman organizer the chance to arrange the programme so that it suited her social objectives. Certainly, women tended to react with pride whenever they undertook this role. When Susan Burney was put in charge of the programme of a private concert, she noted in her letter-journal 'I was chosen *Maestro*'.[98] Nor was it unusual for women to control admittance to public concerts, such

[94] Fowke MS E4, 95. [95] Fowke MS E4, 201. [96] Fowke MS E4, 107.
[97] Fowke MS E9, 114. [98] BL, Egerton MS 3692; 30 Apr. 1784.

as the Bach–Abel series.[99] High-society patrons of this kind were presumably also able to exercise influence on the choice of repertoire. The music favoured by Joseph Fowke, essentially the 'ancient' string repertoire of Corelli, Handel, Geminiani, Tartini, and Avison, was of little use for his daughter's social purposes, and it thus had to be excluded entirely or got over as early in the evening as possible. Because they almost never played the violin, women could only act as accompanists on the harpsichord, a subordinate role, which hardly suited their need to 'star'. For this purpose, the ideal genre was the accompanied sonata, in which the roles taken by instruments in the older trio sonata idiom were completely reversed. The keyboard player (a woman) had the substantive part, while her male accompanists (one in the case of a sonata, three in the case of a quartet) were confined to material of little musical consequence. It is hardly surprising that in subscription lists for accompanied sonatas, women should feature more prominently than in those for other genres.[100] Margaret was very anxious that such works should feature prominently in her programmes. Her struggle to ensure that her soirées should not turn into miniature concerts of 'ancient' music continued throughout the period of her residence in Calcutta. Faced with the prospect of concert parties dominated by this repertoire, she sought first to dissuade her father by hinting at a general lack of sympathy for his taste:

Calcutta, 25 April 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> The concert gives some faint signs of revival. I tremble lest it should recover and bore us again. He [Joseph Fowke] is practising Tartini (a concerto) with infinite perseverance, and as he means I know to perform it to the conoisseurs as a trial of their taste, and frequently observes that his concert is much missed, I think it will revive in all its terrors—*grand dommage*! *Mais que faire*? I tell him it is not liked, in which he differs from me.[101]

A compromise was reached. Evenings began with Joseph's choice and continued with Margaret's music. Only after his daughter's departure for Benares was he able to indulge his passion without hindrance, albeit not without boring one of Margaret's women correspondents, who wrote wistfully, regretting the change: 'I attend your father's concerts regularly where we have old Corelli, Handel and Geminiani in perfection, notwithstanding which a concerto played by you would be most gratefull to my ears.'[102]

The order in which music was performed at the Fowke soirées arranged by Margaret thus owed everything to the social purposes of the evening's entertainment:

ancient instrumental music
modern instrumental music
songs
meal
glees

[99] McVeigh, *Concert Life in London*, 23.

[100] S. Sadie, in H. Diack Johnstone and R. Fiske, eds., *Music in Britain: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 315.

[101] Fowke MS E4, 46.

[102] Fowke MS E5, 60; 20 Feb. 1785.

The general principles seem to have been: old before new; instrumental before vocal; formal before informal; serious before light. The typical evening began with Handel or Corelli, played by the men, with the assistance of professional musicians. This was followed by the more modern repertoire, in which the hostess could demonstrate her accomplishment in the fashionable sonata genres. As the time for the meal approached, there would be opportunities for songs, and for other guests to offer 'party pieces'. At this stage the musicians were usually discharged, and after supper, the company would break up into smaller, more informal groups for glee singing.

The part played by hired musicians in support of young women in their endeavour to present an image of accomplishment comes out very clearly in the Fowke letters. Once again, the fundamentally ambivalent position of the leading professional player, who was musically central but socially peripheral to the proceedings, could be a cause of tension. He might, with very good reason, regard his services as essential to the smooth running of the evening. He would perform as required and he might reasonably expect his views to carry some weight if, for example, it became necessary to discourage an unrealistic choice of music. This was all very well, but the inherent ambiguity in his position would come into focus sharply if a serious mistake occurred in a performance. To be able to play a piece *without stopping* was considered by amateur musicians of the time (as now) one of the surest indicators of competence. It was a prime responsibility of the professional violinist to ensure that such breakdowns did not occur. In the summer of 1788, Susan Burney watched a masterful performance of this kind from a Swiss violinist, who was accompanying a young piano pupil of hers: 'Scheener got on wth her wonderfully well, supporting her where feeble, slackening his pace, & quickening it again just as she did.' All this was managed so adroitly, that the company appeared unaware that anything untoward was happening. Only because 'there had been no *absolute stop*—thanks to the *accompaniment*' was the young woman's failure turned into success. With the utmost tact, Scheener then conveyed to Susan Burney (so she thought) that he knew that she had been aware of the true merit of the performance: 'Scheener then turned his eyes on me wth a look so comically expressive, that I was convinced *he* at least felt that I was aware of all in which my pupil had failed.' Everyone was thus satisfied: the company could applaud their young talent, while the teacher's musical sensibility was acknowledged, an outcome only possible because the performance had kept going.[103] A performance that fell apart placed the musicians, particularly the women, in the socially embarrassing position of having to explain away a failure so obvious that it struck at the very heart of the all-important image of accomplishment. Any breakdown had therefore to be explained away without implicating the woman. On the night of Margaret Fowke's concert on 25 April, there was no professional to take the blame and so abuse, doubtless well merited, was amusingly directed at the harpsichord. The normal expectation, however, was that, irrespective of who was actually at fault, the leading musician present should accept responsi-

[103] New York Public Library, Berg Collection, Journal-Letter of Susan Phillips, Aug. 1788.

bility for what had happened. Therein lay the dilemma. A professional with a reputation to maintain would hardly wish to appear as an incompetent, yet he could not afford to antagonize his employer by embarrassing her. MacArthur's technique lacked the subtlety of his Swiss contemporary, but nonetheless commands admiration: a robust defence of his position in public, followed the next day by an obsequious and probably insincere act of contrition.

It was equally open to a man to arrange a musical evening for the purpose of initiating a courtship with a woman. In a gossipy letter to Lady Clive, her cousin described how three young men in Madras had used music to attempt to ingratiate themselves with an attractive widow:

Madras, 24 October 1764 Mr Kelsall to Margaret Clive

> I am much obliged to your Ladyship for introducing me to Mrs Maitlands acquaintance, she could not be prevailed on to make Mr Shatton happy, tho' he was very desirous of detaining her at Madras—the courtship was a very extraordinary one, in which poor George exposed himself greatly. Mrs Maitland was made much of whilst she was here, my chums (Mr Aldersey whom you may remember and Mr Holland who I hope one day or other to present to your Ladyship) and I (who by the by are all extravagantly fond of Musick) were the foremost of her Admirers, that is to say, we were captivated with her singing—We were continually contriving means of falling in her company for the sake of a song, and one Evening made an Entertainment purposely for her—We were vastly taken with some of her Italian songs, and gave the Preference to them; tho' the great Mr Handel was not forgot. We had 'The Morning Lark' (an old favorite of yours I remember) and some other choice ones—If I was so captivated with Mrs Maitland's singing, who does not sing perfectly in Tune (as Mr Aldersey, who has a very nice Ear, discover'd) and her voice accompanyed not by very good performers, what a Happiness have I to come—That of seeing an Opera . . . My chum Tom Holland is at this time playing 'Son Amante' a favorite Italian song of Mrs Maitland's.[104]

With its light tone, this description is in notable contrast to Margaret Fowke's more anguished and personal accounts of her musical evenings. Any physical attraction felt by the writer is masked by the focus on the woman's voice. To be 'captivated' by a woman's singing was a recognized way of saying something else.

Glee Singing

The special place of glee singing in late eighteenth-century Anglo-Indian society is very evident indeed in the Fowke correspondence. Few genres were so well suited to India. Not only was glee singing free from the tiresome struggle against the elements, to which music-making with instruments was constantly subject, but it was the one form of music-making which could take place entirely without professional assistance. No matter how great the humidity or recalcitrant the hired violinists, domestic soirées could always include glee singing. The simplicity of the genre

[104] NLW, Aberystwyth, Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 37.

encouraged wide participation. To judge by the fact that about three times as many individuals are mentioned by the Fowkes in connection with glee singing than with instrumental music, it had a wider spread than any other form of ensemble musical activity. Certainly there was no requirement to be a trained singer. A modest voice was perfectly acceptable if tuning and rhythm were accurate. Francis Fowke, evaluating a potential glee singer for his sister, drew her attention to the 'goodness of his manner' and his 'strict attention to time'. These characteristics, he believed, would 'make him a valuable acquisition to our glee parties'.[105] Joseph Fowke expressed similar sentiments about his daughter's voice, commending its accuracy: '[He] is very desirous of my singing—says that I have no voice—none—a bad one, but that the truth of my singing, would make my voice a great acquisition in a glee.'[106]

As we have seen, in the domestic concert parties organized by Margaret Fowke, glees were usually scheduled for late in the evening. Once the formal part of the entertainment was over, the professional musicians, whose presence might have been viewed as inhibiting, were dismissed and glee groups formed, according to the tastes of the participants. The musical order of the domestic soirée thus mirrored closely that of the Catch Club, albeit with a very different conclusion: formal instrumental music–meal–decorous glee singing; formal instrumental music–meal–bawdy catches and drinking. Mixed glee singing during these late evening domestic sessions had its own social and musical etiquette. There is no doubt that glee singing was viewed by young women as an activity which would facilitate spending time in close proximity with men. Margaret, clearly on the look-out for a husband, reserved her most acidic comments for young men who failed to get it right. On one occasion, the epithet 'scélerat' was applied to a male glee singer, merely because he had failed to divine which part she really wanted to sing.[107] A competitive element also creeps into some of her comments about other women glee singers. In the following passage of gossip, the underlined words (here given in italics), as so often, give the clue:

Calcutta, 3 May 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> I am very glad Mr R. is so agreeable a performer—you are certainly very fortunate in having so many musical people out of so small a number . . . I wished myself at Benares to chime in with the singers. By your account of Mrs R. she would be a good second to me. Playdell begged me to sing a canzonet with him last night. As the party was large, and I had not sung them a great while I had not courage. Birch is always crying up his belle as having *enormous capabilities* for glee singing. Mr P[resident] does not like to be thrown out of the upper parts himself—they are easily learnt and display his high notes to advantage.[108]

Although Margaret Fowke organized her soirées with a 'list', the last part of the evening was always conducted more informally. This was because when it came to

[105] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E7, 23; 30 Mar. 1785. [106] Fowke MS E4, 66; 3 May 1783.
[107] Fowke MS E4, 39; 25 April 1783. [108] Fowke MS E4, 66; 3 May 1783.

glee singing involving unmarried men and women, social propriety dictated that men should ask the women to join in. It is clear that an invitation to one woman (over another) to sing might well be taken as an acknowledgement of more than musical partiality. Although glees were published in four, five, and six parts, Margaret almost invariably chose pieces from the more intimate three-part repertoire. The distribution of the three parts (called 'firsts', 'seconds', and 'basses' by the Fowkes) was usually one man with two women, or two men with one woman. Without unduly stretching the point, it is tempting to see in the three-part mixed glee, an encapsulation of the courting couple/chaperon trio: belle–married woman–beau; or belle–brother–beau. The texts of glees sung in such contexts needed to be above reproach, even if beneath contempt. In view of its historical association with the catch, it was accepted that glee texts for the use of ladies had to be whiter than white. The perception that some glees were suitable for women, while others were not, was shared by Margaret. In 1783, her brother received six volumes of Warren's collection of catches and glees. Although 'elegantly bound', she regretted it was not 'a Lady's collection'.[109] Publishers increasingly felt the need to offer reassurance on this point. In *Apollonian Harmony* (*c.*1795) the words are characterized as being 'consistent with female delicacy'.

The code of etiquette surrounding social glee singing included the management of musical failure. Paradoxically, its very simplicity meant that the glee was revealing of musicianship. To be unable to sustain a part in this genre was sure to be taken as unambiguous evidence of musical ineptitude. In so intimate a setting, nothing could be concealed, neither unwanted tremor, nor strangulated squeak, as a nervous voice approached the limits of its accustomed register. Margaret was conscious of these pitfalls, and she refers from time to time to small problems of range, to parts lying in the wrong part of the voice—too high or low for a particular singer. If she felt in the least uncertain of the prognosis of her performance, she would refuse the invitation to sing. Many years later, after his return to London, Francis received a letter about a recent glee party, in which an acquaintance had failed miserably. An interesting distinction is made:

(London), n.d. R. Davenport to Francis Fowke

> On all these accounts I rejoice (for your sake at the moment) at the screw you must have had with our fr[d] Starke . . . I cannot help wondering that a person who has no ear can like to sing glees. A song sung out of tune all the way may be *something like* melody, for you can distinguish what tune is meant, but nothing is like harmony that is not harmony. He must therefore I think like it as an employment or consider it as an accomplishm[t] without a capability of the pleasure aris[g] from music. I am so angry that I can't help adding that altho' when a man sings out of *tune* with you, you can't help yourself, yet if he can't keep nearly in *time*, you have a right to say we're out and stop; for you may do it without much reflection on him, for it may be only from not hav[g] it well by heart.[110]

[109] Fowke MS E4, 193; 7 July 1783.

[110] Fowke MS E9, 89.

Etiquette would apparently disallow any corrective comment on a grossly out-of-tune singer on the grounds that the offending individual would be identified, and his lack of 'ear' revealed. Non-counters, however, were more open to attack.

There are many passages in Margaret's letters relating to glee singing. Much of the material is routine. The most revealing comments come in descriptions of her voyage up the Ganges, a significant moment in her life. Finally free from her father's restrictive domestic regime, she was eagerly anticipating her entrance into a new social circle, and the formation of a regular glee party with her brother, to which new musical men could be invited. Such groups did not happen by chance; they had to be planned. Margaret intended to be fully prepared by the time she reached Benares. Her highest priority was to ensure that her voice was in good shape, and she thus intended to use the months of the voyage to work on her vocal technique and to prepare repertoire. Never having travelled up the Ganges before, she was perhaps unaware that it was considered an important part of the 'Indian' experience. Her practice time would be limited not only by the sight-seeing trips and by the inevitable courtesy calls on European residents, but also by the confined living space on the two budgerows, in which the party was to make the voyage upstream. Since she insisted on strict privacy for her singing practice, her Ganges voyage was an intensely frustrating experience:

The following extracts are from the diary of Margaret Fowke's vocal practice during her Ganges voyage:

Chinsura, 13 September 1783

I sung how sweet is the woodlands with Miss Williams. We were alone in the Veranda. She sung a pretty good second. I sung my part pretty well, but I am excessively out of practise. 'Drink to me only with thine eyes' is a fashionable little glee; Williams sung the second to it admirably well. Sulivan assisted me with his flute and I took the upper part. Why had we not your bass to make the harmony complete?

14 September 1783

I beg you will make a point of learning the bass of 'When Mira sings' very perfect. Be very exact in the time. Get up as many of *my* glees (you cannot forget any of the little number) as you possibly can. I should be particularly delighted with having 'O'er William's tomb' in all its parts quite complete. You may tell the jew in order to encourage him to learn it that Lady Chambers sings the upper part. Would you believe that since I have been in my budgerow I have scarcely had any opportunity of practising—our budgerows are often together—I am frequently in theirs and they in mine.

22 September 1783

As I have a musical ardour upon me it would certainly be more agreeable to me to have my mornings uninterrupted, but in a party of this kind it is impossible to follow one's own inclinations . . .

off Barrampore, 23 September 1783

My voice . . . my darling pursuit suffers much. I rise very early in the morning, seat myself upon the top of my budgerow and exercise it. Madame la Baronne's is so near

me that I am often almost afraid. I assure you that I will in the same manner snatch hours for thorough-bass. My very lesson playing is gone back, all my musical studies having been almost wholly interrupted these five or six weeks past.

Take care to have 'I loved the beautiful' quite ready, and the bass to 'When Mira sings'. Would you believe that that Barbarian the child came and borrowed my Purcel! and my fair copy of Jackson, and took them into her budgerow! I left her in quiet possession for two days, and this afternoon gave them to my hircarrah to convey to my boat. I thought she was sleeping, but the watchful thief exclaimed what are you taking away these two music books! Only I answered while we are at the city. She will certainly claim them again. I beg you will tame that wild faun.

Yesterday and today I have sung a great deal, and looked at the canzonet you recommended 'The day that saw thy beauty rise'. You may depend upon my learning both the bass and the upper part quite perfect and of the rest too if I possibly can. I think this canzonet is a very fine one, but it is not suited to my voice. If you will look over it you will find it is mostly in the worst part of it. I intreat that you will take care to have our favourite glee 'How sleep the brave' ready—you know it is only a trio. If Jack and you will learn the tenor and bass I will have the treble quite perfect. Would that your P. could sing this sweet elegy in '. . . notes more musically clear, Than ever fairybreathed in mortal ear'. It would delight me much if that were my style. How do you expect to find my voice? I hope much improved—we have been separated five months . . . I shall sing as often as I possibly can, for it would grieve me if you were to find I had lost ground.

near Mongheer, 17 October 1783

I believe *very* few days have passed since I have been in my budgerow without my singing a *little*, and very often I have sung a good deal, yet I do assure you my voice is by no means in such good order as you left it in; my interruptions have been too long. I look into Jackson's canzonets most days. I s^{d} be very happy to have 'The day that sees thy beauty rise' transposed into F which is a third higher and suits my voice very well. I like the pitch of the rest. The only two glees which I shall sing well are 'Come live with me' and 'How sleep the brave'. I now most commonly stay in my budgerow a good part of the morning. I think I am much gone back in music every way even in harpsicord lessons since you left me, yet I can really charge myself with *very little* idleness.[111]

To maintain her daily regime of practice during the voyage required no small amount of discipline. Margaret's primary objective was to be ready to participate in glees and canzonets in Benares. She was obviously anticipating that the quality of her voice would be an important element in the impression which she would make on Benares (male) society. The vision of Margaret, seated on top of her budgerow in the early morning light, startling any passing crocodiles with her scales, is a striking image of the Englishwoman in India.

A love of glee singing remained with the Fowkes after their return to England. Wherever the various members of the family found themselves, whether in Calcutta, Benares, Rome, or London, the formation of a glee party was a matter of interest. As

[111] Fowke MS E4, 383–520.

in other spheres of musical activity, the return to England afforded Anglo-Indians the opportunity of singing with musicians of higher calibre than were available in India. The Fowkes made the acquaintance of Charles Knyvett, one of the leading glee singers in London. Described by Parke as 'perhaps the best catch singer in England', he was approached for material: 'We must take Knivett with us in planning the Glees, and no doubt he can have many new unpublished ones.'[112]

The position of the glee in Anglo-Indian society marks it out as an unusually egalitarian genre: married and single, old and young, the skilled and the less skilled, all could take part with complete propriety and on equal terms. In an age in which there were marked differences in the instruments and genres considered appropriate for men and women, glees provided neutral musical territory.

Issues of Gender

The evidence of Margaret Fowke's studies in India confirms that gender was a powerful influence on the conduct of amateur music-making in the late eighteenth century, more so, perhaps, than other significant factors, such as age, ability, commitment, resources, and location. Gender determined not only the instruments appropriate for men and women, but also the manner in which music was studied and performed. For women, tuition was systematic, practice intensive, performance domestic, repertoire keyboard-based; for men, tuition was sporadic, practice haphazard, performance public or semi-public, and repertoire string-based. It is hardly surprising that some genres should have developed so distinct a gender identity. In instrumental music, most of the major women's genres, solo keyboard music, the accompanied sonata, and English guitar solos, were suited to lone performance, enabling them to survive 'those *ruffled* or *lonely* hours, which in almost every situation will be your lot'.[113] Women were thus well equipped (musically) to survive periods of isolation. For most of the major male string genres, concerto grosso, trio sonata, quartet, quintet, and symphony, group performance was essential. Only the relatively minor genres of solo and duo flute and violin music acknowledged that men too might need music for lone performance. On the whole, vocal music was assigned to its appropriate gender through consideration of the propriety of its texts, although there were still some separate genres: for men the bawdy catch; for women the decorous glee. In addition to its influence on these essentially practical matters, gender could also profoundly affect critical attitudes to music itself; men and women, at times, seemed to espouse differing aesthetic viewpoints. Yet while the letters of Margaret Fowke, with their sharply observed accounts of music-making, provide eloquent testimony to the strength of these stereotypes in the world of the late eighteenth-century musical amateur, at the same time, they suggest that the relationship between ideology and reality was an ambivalent one. Theory

[112] BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/26, 157–9.

[113] Reverend John Bennet, *Letters to a Young Lady* (Warrington, 1789); Leppert, *The Sight of Sound*, 67.

did not always determine practice, and ideological orthodoxy, seemingly so dominant in the courtesy book tradition and in images of men and women making music, was in real life subverted to a considerable extent.

Margaret Fowke's self-portrait of her development as a musical amateur gains in value because, although in no sense a feminist before her time, she was certainly well aware of issues of gender. It is not recorded whether she ever read Mary Wollstonecraft's *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters, with Reflections on Female Conduct in the More Important Duties of Life*, published in London in 1787, but the appearance of the first substantial feminist challenge to the prevailing ideology coincided both with her marriage and with the attainment of her long-standing objective to become a 'finished' keyboard musician. Many of the attitudes criticized in Wollstonecraft's polemic were those that she and many other women musicians were coming to understand and challenge in their own lives.

In the light of her own strong resistance to paternal 'oppression', it is hardly surprising that Margaret had little patience with the common view expressed by Henry Home that unqualified obedience was the ordained lot of women: 'Women, destined by nature to be obedient, ought to be disciplined early to bear wrongs, without murmuring.'[114] With an irony worthy of an Elizabeth Bennett, she put down the author of one such comment: 'A lady lately arrived, Mrs Stafford, is a very handsome young woman . . . she has a mild pleasing manner and says there is a great connection between the duties of a daughter and wife as both are to *obey*—happy fellow this Captain Stafford to have such a beautiful obedient wife!'[115] Perhaps the most widely read (and ignored?) authority on the ideology of gender was Lord Chesterfield, whose published letters of advice to his son argued that women were simply not to be taken seriously: 'A man of sense only trifles with them, plays with them, humors and flatters them, as he does with a sprightly forward child; but he neither consults them about, nor trusts them with serious matters.'[116] Margaret was certainly not to be thus patronized. She was extremely sensitive to the slightest hint that her beloved brother was not taking her concerns seriously, whilst having the sense to realize that her father was a hopelessly lost cause. Writing to complain of his failure to correspond frequently enough, she rather pointedly invoked Chesterfield: 'I like not thy silence *il mio caro fratello*. Lord Chesterfield says women never make any allowance either for illness or business; God forbid you should have the former excuse.'[117] If she was going to continue to write to him with lengthy accounts of her musical progress, she was certainly not going to be fobbed off by any of Lord Chesterfield's excuses.

The clearest demonstration that Margaret's views were being shaped by perceptions of gender comes in a critique that she wrote of Richardson's *Clarissa*:

Calcutta, 18 May 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> The night before last for instance I had a little musical party. I was bent upon shining in one piece of Rauzzini, which you have heard me play, and two concertos of Abel.

[114] *Loose Hints upon Education* (Edinburgh and London, 1781); Leppert, *Music and Image*, 37.

[115] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E4, 143; 29 June 1783.

[116] Leppert, *Music and Image*, 36.

[117] Fowke MS E4, 99; 18 May 1783.

> The latter depend entirely upon a brilliant execution, which I have never courage even to aim at unless I am quite sure of the passages. Inspired by vanity I rose early, determined to conquer them, to be *au fait* in some flourishes. A volume of Clarissa lay upon my table. I happened to dip into it, and tho' I know it all by heart I could not lay it down again the whole morning. It was spent in tears instead of music. Wonderful Richardson! Wonderful he must be called, for in the pathetic he undoubtedly excels the whole world. We are greatly affected and drop a few tears . . .[118]

Although this novel was a favourite of hers, exciting her imagination and stirring deep emotions, she had some reservations:

> Neither has Richardson in my opinion ever drawn any male character so happily as Miss Howe's. He may therefore in some measure be considered as a panigirist of women from drawing two such characters and describing such an enthusiastick and delightful friendship between them. Yet I always consider Richardson's writings in general to be a satire upon our sex. I feel my pride almost wounded at a man's representing his hero absolutely *irresistable.* This is as improbable as any of the heroic actions of Ariosto's knights. A man who has beauty, riches, wit and talents . . . may certainly do some mischief in the world, but a universally successful lover is an ideal character. Richardson, a little impolitely to the women, has informed us that none but a Clarissa could resist even the dishonourable addresses of a Lovelace. He was as secure of favor thro' the whole circle of his female acquaintance, as an eastern prince among his thousand beauties. I have likewise some other objections to this work, which I believe, you have heard me make, yet upon the whole I think it one of the most wonderful and engaging works that ever was imagined. The first letter which Clarissa wrote to Lovelace after her delirium is the most affecting piece either in tragedy or prose which I ever read. I wish Richardson had made his Clarissa with some wild verses in her delirium, and that a Purcel could be found to compose music for them.

Margaret clearly felt that this portrayal of an 'irresistable' man was demeaning to her sex, implying a lack of will-power among women generally.

The extent to which her approach to music-making was influenced by her perceptions of gender stereotype may sometimes be inferred from her correspondence. On many practical questions there is no hint that she had the least wish to rebel against current orthodoxy. Not once, for example, did she challenge the convention that, as a woman, she should play the harpsichord, pianoforte, or English guitar, while her father and brother played the violin. However, some of the more extreme misogynist attitudes expressed in the courtesy book tradition seem simply absurd when applied to her career as a keyboard player. Erasmus Darwin argued that women should deliberately restrict the level of their attainment, in order not to compete in public with their husbands:

> It is perhaps more desirable, that young ladies should play, sing, and dance, only so well as to amuse themselves and their friends, than to practice those arts in so eminent a degree as to astonish the public; because a great apparent attention to trivial accomplishments is liable to give suspicion, that more valuable acquisitions have been neglected.[119]

[118] Fowke MS E4, 99.

[119] Erasmus Darwin, *Plan of Female Education* (London, 1797); Leppert, *Music and Image*, 39.

For passionate devotees of music like the Fowkes, this kind of advice would have seemed laughable. The whole family, those living in England as well as those in India, were keenly interested in Margaret's progress, facilitating her further development at every opportunity, and taking great pride in her achievements. Nor was the wider Anglo-Indian community uninterested. The achievements of amateurs in Calcutta were often portrayed as an affirmation of the quality of the city's colonial musical culture. Naturally, many Anglo-Indian women were well aware of their limitations; but most merely regretted their lack of talent, which is quite different from their having deliberately curtailed it. This aspect of gender ideology seems to have been widely ignored, and was perhaps mocked.

An effective way of challenging some of the conventional restrictions placed upon the musical activities of women was to bypass them. On the basis of a relatively small number of *causes célèbres*, it is often claimed that women were debarred from appearing on the public concert platform. The number of women performers (excluding the special case of opera singers) who *did* appear in public concerts by the late eighteenth century suggests that, if this prohibition had ever been a serious obstacle, it was now beginning to weaken in force. Most women who took up a public career did so on 'women's' instruments, as in the case of Jane Guest (piano) and Madame Krumpholtz (harp), but a few abandoned gender stereotypes altogether, as did Madame Gautherot (violin.) But if a 'public' career was still the exception, the domain in which women performers had always been welcome, the fashionable society soirée, was flourishing as never before. The question arises as to whether the generality of skilled amateur women players even wished to become public performers. To view the private concert culture as a negative phenomenon, one which effectively confined women to an essentially domestic context for their performances, is perhaps to take an anachronistic view of the relative prestige of public and private concerts. It is certainly the case that courtesy books sought to confine women's performance in the context of the domestic setting. According to one anonymous author, even untalented girls ought to acquire musical facility, so that 'they can amuse their *own family*, and for that domestic *comfort, they* were by Providence designed to promote'.[120] But the society soirée in late eighteenth-century England was at least as prestigious socially as the public concert, and it is arguable that it achieved such prominence at this period precisely because it suited the needs of women so well. As the star performers in private concerts, women were freed from the iron discipline of the pre-published programme; nor was there any need to worry about falling victim to the savage pen of the eighteenth-century music critic. On the contrary, the reception of their efforts could take place in the well-established culture of flattery. Social standing, dress, deportment, and the choice of fashionable repertoire would determine success as much as technical competence or interpretative insight.

A significant aspect of the culture of the private soirée, one that tends to undermine further any sense that 'domestic' performance in the Victorian parlour manner

[120] *Euterpe* (*c.*1778); Leppert, *The Sight of Sound*, 67.

was of necessity drearily confining to women, was its lack of geographical limitation. 'Society', the well-to-do middle- and upper-class audiences for whom women pianists like Margaret Fowke performed, could be constituted literally anywhere in the world. The late eighteenth century was an era of unprecedented mobility for many women. Margaret Fowke's travels during the 1770s and 1780s were by no means exceptional for a young woman with an Anglo-Indian background: she made the sea voyage to Calcutta and back; she sailed up the Ganges to Benares and back; upon her return to London, she embarked on a Grand Tour, visiting Italy and Switzerland. Even within England she travelled frequently, moving periodically between her country residence and her town house during the season. Added to this, there were visits to fashionable spas like Bath, or resorts like Brighton, extended stays with relatives, and many shorter visits to acquaintances. In the novels of Austen, a palpable sense of freedom, even liberation, is expressed by women about to undertake a visit, even one to an acquaintance or relative living nearby. It is as though the mere act of travel could break a real sense of confinement. Any evaluation of the status of the 'career' of a woman pianist like Margaret Fowke must take full account of the impact of travel on its significance, as perceived by performer and audience alike. There is no sense anywhere in her letters that to play in the context of private society soirées was a pointless or an unworthy goal, self-evidently inferior to that of a public setting. Rather, as she prepared for each new 'début', a sense of anxiety and excitement at a forthcoming challenge are the dominant emotions. Having played in soirées in Benares and Calcutta, Turin and Rome, London and Brighton, her activities as a piano player, in geographical terms at least, spanned a much wider area than that covered by most professionals of the era.

A more insidious limitation on the musical development of women was the belief that they should not engage with music as a science. The existence of this altogether subtler, and thus perhaps more potent restriction, was identified by Wollstonecraft, who argued that girls did not learn enough of music 'to render it an employment of the mind'.[121] It was not particularly difficult to separate the theoretical study of music from its practical execution, but there were one or two intersections, figured bass, for example, where theoretical knowledge could not be avoided by the performer. The consequences of Margaret Fowke's failure to engage in the theory of music are clear enough in her vain struggle to achieve mastery of the improvised cadenza, an art for which some knowledge of harmonic theory was essential. Far from complaining about her lack of theoretical training, however, she proclaimed her belief that the performance and reception of music did not depend upon such knowledge:

25 January 1785 Margaret Fowke to Warren Hastings

> . . . Indeed you are right in not regretting that you have never studied Music. We performers, the whole race of us, are always ready to play, and the power of music over a hearer certainly does not depend upon his knowledge, but upon a quick sensibility to

[121] Leppert, *Music and Image*, 43.

> a variety of emotions—Of this here is a clear proof—You may often meet with a performer who has conquered all the difficulties of Music without knowing one of its powers; Listening to the finest music with an inflexible face and even playing it without the faintest perception of the sentiment that inspired the composer—while another who knows little more than a Country dance or a few Scotch airs will give the one such vivacity, and the other such softness of expression that a whole company will instantly feel the charm.
>
> You see how little I respect musical knowledge; when we meet—a distant day?—I will give you one more proof how much I wish to make you my hearer tho' you do not possess it—I promise you variations upon some of your favorite airs, and I hope you will hear them with the pleasure which I shall have in making them . . .[122]

This might well be taken as Margaret Fowke's musical credo. As a woman of sentiment, who could be moved to tears by the pathos of a novel, she placed expression in performance as her highest musical goal. This was a quality, as readily to be found in a 'Hindostannie' or 'Scotch' air, a cotillon or a country dance, as in a 'fine' composition by a learned master. Her values are exactly those of Austen. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mary Bennett, being 'the only plain one in the family', is allowed to have 'worked hard for knowledge and accomplishments'. Her efforts in public performance failed risibly for precisely the reason articulated by Margaret Fowke:

> Mary had neither genius nor taste; and though vanity had given her application, it had given her likewise a pedantic air and conceited manner, which would have injured a higher degree of excellence than she had reached. Elizabeth, easy and unaffected, had been listened to with much more pleasure, though not playing half so well; and Mary, at the end of a long concerto, was glad to purchase praise and gratitude by Scotch and Irish airs, at the request of her younger sisters, who with some of the Lucases and two or three officers joined eagerly in dancing at one end of the room.

Here indeed was a performer who had 'conquered the difficulties' of music without 'knowing one of its powers'. In a woman the slightest hint of pedantry, which in a man might be taken as an acceptable if dull demonstration of scientific learning, spelt social ruin.

[122] BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/25, 2.

4

The Male Dilettante

String-Playing

Male attitudes to musical accomplishment come across very clearly indeed in Anglo-Indian letters of the late eighteenth century. Being on the whole free from external pressures to acquire musical ability, the requirement to 'peak' during the years of young adulthood was much less intense than it was for women, whose marriage prospects might be adversely affected by any perceived lack of accomplishment. Lack of motivation was rather the problem. Reading through accounts of the Anglo-Indian male at his music, one is persistently struck by a general lack of urgency.

The inevitable result of a desultory attitude to practice was a low standard of performance. In some cases, this was obscured by self-deception on a scale that makes for comical reading. A certain William Harrison took up the violin in India, hoping by the time of his return to be able to take part in Margaret Clive's private concerts. He admitted to encountering some difficult passages, but these caused few problems; they were simply omitted:

Canton, 23 December 1771 William Harrison to Margaret Clive

> To alleviate in some measure the Horrors of the Place, I have taken up the Violin and do assure you make a tolerable hand in Concert—whenever a difficult passage occurs I skip it over and the rest is easily managed—by the time I depart I may aspire to a part in Lady Clive's private Concerts.[1]

For many male amateurs it was a matter of real regret that they had not taken music seriously during their early years. Lady Clive's cousin Thomas Kelsall felt that as he had a tolerable ear for music, he ought to be ashamed that he had not achieved much. Although it was now too late to hope to achieve any real fluency, he made the effort, writing from time to time to inform her of his painfully slow progress:

[1] NLW, Aberystwyth, Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 34.

Calcutta, 28 February 1768 Thomas Kelsall to Margaret Clive

> Much as I have neglected Music, I hope yet by the time I get home to be able to accompany you with the Violin. I Entertain a Musician and at Dacca there's a Gentleman who is a good Performer and not a day passes, but we three play together. I regret that I did not apply earlier, for I have a good ear and am sure might under a good Master have made some proficiency—now it may be too late.[2]

Calcutta, 12 April 1771 Thomas Kelsall to Margaret Clive

> I make no doubt but that you continue to apply to your Music; for my part I find that my Passion for this favorite amusement encreases and I have now to lament that I did not take it up earlier. I make shift to take a Repieno Bass, or some inferior Part in a Croud; and among ourselves, for We are a Trio in the same House. I generally play the Bass.[3]

In this case, the love of music seems genuine enough, but some men, knowing of the Clives' tastes, perhaps claimed an interest, merely to advance their careers.

The frequency with which men expressed regret at their failure early in life to study music with sufficient commitment for it now to be a real pleasure to them, is itself testimony to the existence of an ideology which discouraged boys from serious musical study. Lord Chesterfield's contempt for 'piping and fiddling', which 'puts a gentleman in a very frivolous, contemptible light', was only the most extreme statement of a view commonly held by writers of courtesy books.[4] Support for this view was perhaps especially prevalent in the highest levels of English society. As Leppert has pointed out, the sight of a nobleman carrying an instrument case was rare enough to merit comment. Lord Mornington was credited with being 'the first member of the British aristocracy who dared to walk through the London streets openly and unashamedly carrying a violin case'.[5] Yet it is unlikely that this view was widely shared by the middle classes. Across the length and breadth of England, music societies, relying heavily on keen 'gentlemen' amateurs, were flourishing as never before, and newer forms of male social music-making were achieving great popularity, notably the quartet party. Chesterfield's ideology was evidently under serious attack from below. The middle classes, whilst actively seeking the status and social attributes of the landed gentry, were by no means inclined to accept uncritically every aspect of its ideological prescription. The result was that whether they regarded music as a pastime or as a real passion, more and more men wished to participate themselves, rather than merely act as patrons.

The feeling that male amateur musicians had ground to make up, as a result of the ineffectiveness of their early musical study, led to the development of some odd attitudes. Self-delusion was commonplace. The belief was widespread that instrumen-

[2] Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 37.

[3] Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 34.

[4] R. Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1993), 68.

[5] R. Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 25.

tal practice was something that could be abandoned for extended periods, to be taken up again with no loss of technique when circumstances permitted. In India, there were times of intense commercial, political, or military activity, when musical instruments had to be set aside. The sudden collapse of a musical circle might leave a player with too few friends to perform a favoured repertoire. Faced with this problem, Joseph Fowke responded by putting his violin away, and he was soon claiming that his fiddle had 'not been touched' for three months.[6] By September, sheer boredom had apparently driven him to take it up again:

Calcutta, 4 September 1784 Joseph Fowke to Margaret Fowke

> Necessity has forced me to make one more trial of the power of music for the relief of my solitary hours. I took up the fiddle a day or two ago, and played once after an intermission of eight months. I intend to force myself upon a repetition of the Exercise. My fingers perform their office unwillingly and sluggishly, and my ear is not nearly so correct as it was, a note falsely stopped passes unnoticed. All which matters little if I am to please only myself, and it is not probable I shall have it in my power to please anybody else . . .[7]

It was usually possible to persuade oneself, that long-neglected skills could be easily recovered:

Calcutta, 15 November 1784 Joseph Fowke to Margaret Fowke

> In my last I acquainted you with my having resumed the Violin, and I have continued in the practice of it ever since to my great relief, and with much greater success than I coud possibly have expected, having recovered my play entirely, except my shake which is something less brilliant than before, but my ear is full as correct.[8]

In the early months of 1785, new players arrived in Calcutta, and Joseph was once again able to indulge his passion for the string music of Corelli.

The wretched standards of playing associated with male amateur musicians were much discussed in courtesy books and elsewhere. No one put it better than Thomas Twining, who credited a neighbour with playing in 'a very ungentlemanlike manner, exactly in tune and time, with taste, accent, and meaning, and the true sense of what he plays'.[9] Tuning was an especial problem. According to the author of 'Some Thoughts on the Performance of Concert Music', many gentlemen 'even of considerable execution, stop very much out of tune'.[10] The comments of male Anglo-Indians cited in this study suggest that a common defence mechanism against the embarrassing realization of incompetence (where such existed) was humour. Men on the whole knew they were bad players; most were not unduly concerned by that fact, and some were willing to poke gentle fun at themselves. Another tactic in defence of incompetence was to espouse music in which limitations were not too cruelly exposed. This was surely a factor in the continuing popularity of the

6 BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E5, 30. 7 Fowke MS E5, 43. 8 Fowke MS E4, 53.
9 Leppert, *Music and Image*, 16.
10 N. Zaslaw, 'The Compleat Orchestral Musician', *Early Music*, 7 (1979), 53.

'ancient' repertoire, the music of Corelli having in particular a pleasing simplicity. John Marsh observed that even the instrumentation of early eighteenth-century string music suited the dilettante, with *ripieno* parts being taken by amateurs, and *concertino* parts by professionals.[11] Antipathy to modern music was in part engendered by the fear of being found out in its more virtuosic passages. Writing of the Portsmouth Band, Marsh described how a Mr McArthur, perhaps the violinist who worked in Calcutta in 1783, 'brought the first 2 Setts of Bach & Abel to our Meetings'. There was strong resistance on the part of some players. One 'grumbl'd at the reiterated Quavers upon one Note for Several bars together'.[12] Complaints about modern style were often a cover for worries about its technical difficulty. Many amateur violinists knew that they were not up to it, and there was no escape into the role of 'ripieno' player.

'Ancient' Music in India

One of the best documented aspects of musical life in late eighteenth-century Calcutta is the prominent place of 'ancient' music, both in public concerts and in private soirées. That the works of Purcell, Corelli, and Handel should have been held in high regard in Anglo-Indian circles is not surprising, given that the rise to canonical status of these composers was one of the most distinctive aspects of English musical life of the period. Transplanted into an Indian setting, however, 'ancient' music acquired a distinctive function. Items from its standard vocal repertoire were found to contain colourful expressions of imperial values, some of obvious relevance to the turbulent events of Calcutta's recent history. The association between 'ancient' music and imperialism was thus brought into sharper focus in India than elsewhere, as was the identification of this taste with 'male' values.

The early growth in the reputation of Purcell, Corelli, and Handel in India is difficult to ascertain because of the lack of evidence, but by the mid-century the status of these composers was high. Robert and Margaret Clive, committed to the cause from the 1750s, were influential supporters, and they make an interesting case study in the reception of this repertoire in the upper echelons of Anglo-Indian society. Through their long-term employment of John Stanley, they came under the influence of a man who was directly involved in the promotion of the oratorio repertoire. Stanley himself was connected to the Anglo-Indian fraternity through his clandestine marriage in 1738 to Sarah, daughter of Captain Edward Arlond, who owned stock in the East India Company.[13] In 1751 he took a house in Hatton Garden, close to Queen Square, where the Clives settled after their return from India in 1753. The connection with Stanley was maintained after the Clives moved to Berkeley Square

[11] B. Robins, 'John Marsh and Provincial Music making in Eighteenth-Century England', *Research Chronicle of the Royal Musical Association*, 29 (1996), 101.

[12] Ibid. 101.

[13] M. Boyd, 'New Light on Stanley: 2: Clandestine Marriage', *Musical Times*, 117 (1976), 812–15.

in the West End, the district now preferred by wealthy nabobs for their town houses.[14]

Two letters in Lady Clive's correspondence reveal the family's early interest. The first, from a friend in England who was well aware of her taste, looked forward to her return:

Duffield, 27 November 1758 Robert Clive [not her husband] to Margaret Clive

> It will be a great pleasure to me to accompany you with my fiddle upon the harpsichord in all y[e] tunes you play. You speak very modestly of your musical merit; but I dare say twill be much greater than mine, I must therefore bespeak your Candor, and shall hope for grains of allowance when we meet. However I intend to buy Handels Oratorio songs and prepare myself as well as I can. But Corelli's the man after all, tho' some pretty things are coming out yearly, many of w[ch] will give you great entertainment . . .[15]

A month later, Sarah Stanley replied, on behalf of her husband, to a request that he should take up his former position as music teacher. It is clear that the Clives and the Stanleys had made music together since the early 1750s, and that Corelli was already a firm favourite:

[London], 25 December 1758 Sarah Stanley to Margaret Clive

> I cant help pitying you for the loss of Capt and Mrs Latham, just at a time when you had most Occasion for a Freind to keep up your Spirits but, hope we shall all soon have the pleasure of meeting together and be as merry as we formerly have with Corellis Jigg etc.
>
> Mr Stanley desired me to tell you there is nothing can give him greater pleasure then to meet you in Hatton Garden when he will play Corellis Jigg or anything else you shall Desire . . .[16]

The Clives patronized Stanley's public oratorio performances. Between 1761 and 1764, they were regular attenders at his Lenten series at Covent Garden (Table 5).

Late in life, Robert Clive made a clear statement of his views on the canonical status of composers of 'ancient' music:

Naples, 21 January 1774 Robert Clive to Margaret Clive

> Pray give my Compliments to Miss Ducarrol [Maria Ducarel] and inform her I have already often heard Lady Hamilton perform upon the Harpsichord and Piano Forte, and her execution and expression is wonderful but I am not yet made so great a Convert to Italian Music as to think all other Music pales before it and even that of the great Handel and Corelli—to a Man of my great Ignorance these two great Musicians when compared with all others appear to me as far superior as Homer and Virgil do to all other Poets.[17]

[14] J. Holzman, *Nabobs in England: A Study of the Returned Anglo-Indian, 1760–1785* (New York, 1926), 81–2.

[15] BL, OIOC, Clive MS G37/box 25.

[16] Clive MS G37/box 25.

[17] NLW, Aberystwyth, Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India'.

Table 5. Oratorio performances attended by Lord and Lady Clive, 1761–1764[a]

Date	Account book entry	Performance details
1761		
27 February	Paid at the Oratorio and for a Book 1-3-6	Covent Garden (27 February) *Samson* Concerto on the organ by Stanley
1762		
3 March	Paid at Alexanders Feast 1-3-0	Covent Garden (3 March) *Alexander's Feast* Concerto on the organ by Stanley
1763		
19 February	Paid Cap[t] Benj. Clive for six places at the Oratorio & Books 3-7-0	Covent Garden (18 February) *Occasional Oratorio* Concerto on the organ by Stanley
1764		
30 March	Paid at the Oratorio & Books 1-16-0	Covent Garden (30 March) *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso* Concerto on the organ by Stanley
4 April	Paid at the Oratorio & for books 1-4-0	Covent Garden (4 April) *Judas Maccabeus* Concerto on the organ by Stanley

[a] NLW, Aberystwyth, Clive MSS 17–20.

The comparison between the musical 'ancients' and classical authors was often made; William Jones invoked the reputations of Virgil, Horace, and Cicero. In view of these acknowledged interests, it is not surprising to find in the small number of music books listed in a library catalogue of Clive's, a volume of oratorios and *Orpheus Britannicus*.[18]

Margaret Clive remained a life-long lover of this repertoire. Her enthusiasm for practising 'ancient' music under the tutelage of Stanley continued after her return to England:

Berkeley Square, 29 March 1766 Margaret Clive to Robert Clive

> Except writing to you I have passed most of this winter in studying the thorough Bass, and Mr Stanley has attende[d] me regularly, playing to me on the violin Corelli and

[18] NLW, Aberystwyth, Clive MS 67.

Geminiani's Concertos, with which I know I shall be able at your return to entertain you. For what other reason should I so devote myself to music? true; I love it better than any other amusement, but it was to please you I first learned, and it is now to please you that in your absence I apply myself to it.[19]

Even when travelling abroad, she was at pains to ensure that she had the Handel songs she wanted:

27 April 1768 Margaret Clive to Henry Strachey

I before desired to have the first volume only of Handel's songs. I now desire to have, the moment you receive this, the following songs written viz,

Wise men flattering may deceive you (out of the 5th vol. Handel's songs)
I know that my Redeemer liveth (out of the third volume)
Where e'er you walk cool gales shall fan the glade (out of the second volume)
He shall feed his flock like a shepherd (out of the second volume)[20]

Especially during his last visit to India, Clive would have been in a good position to influence the musical tastes of Calcutta, since the band was under his direct control.

The general growth of interest in 'ancient' music in the city from the 1760s onwards is unmistakable. There were performances of Corelli at the Catch Club, in public subscription concert series, and in domestic soirées. Copies of 'ancient' music were quite widely distributed among the European population of Calcutta. The lengthy list of music held by Thomas Sheeles includes about 12 per cent of 'ancient' instrumental music; sets of Corelli appear three times, sets of Handel four times and there is one set of Geminiani. The inventory of Bernard Messink, who died on passage from Batavia to China in 1785, is of particular interest, because he appears in the Fowke correspondence as an active supporter of this repertoire. Although not large, his collection is that of a serious enthusiast. The bassoon, an instrument rarely owned by the casual musician—and the collection of orchestral music also indicates that he was a committed amateur:

1 Childs Coral Whistle
1 Bassoon wth 3 pipes and Reeds
1 Ivory mounted Floote
1 ditto ditto
1 ditto old ditto
1 Piano Forte
5 Books of Handles Overtures
1 ditto Orpheons Bretanecons
2 long books and 1 Pasqualey Instrmt
1 Stibet Master and Accompt
13 Books handles Songs and Accompt
4 Books a Collection of Ivarstaiks

[19] Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India'.
[20] BL, OIOC, Sutton Court MS F128/93.

A large Collection of Syn^{ts} and Over^{t} 9 Books
A large Collection of Syn^{ts} Over^{t} 9 Books
2 Books 1st and 2 Volume of a Sett of Srior
5 Volumes Hawkins's history music
4 Musick Stand.[21]

Messink's enthusiasm for Purcell was fully shared by Margaret Fowke, who borrowed his copy of *Orpheus Britannicus*, and his ownership of Hawkins rather than Burney is completely in character with his known tastes.

The leading supporter of 'ancient' music in Calcutta during the 1780s was undoubtedly Joseph Fowke. A crusty, cantankerous, combative personality, he never missed an opportunity to argue his belief that the old string composers, Corelli, Geminiani, and Handel, had never been surpassed. His contempt for the moderns extended beyond repertoire to include matters of performance style, which, he believed, had similarly declined since his youth. His most revealing comments come in letters to his daughter during 1784. Margaret by no means shared her father's tastes, but she seems to have deferred to his views to such an extant that he started to deceive himself. A good sign, he felt, was that she was studying figured bass, the acquisition of which hallowed skill would impart to her the 'right' musical values. He expressed the hope that as she advanced in thoroughbass, she would develop 'a contempt for all modern Musick', which could never afford any 'lasting amusement' to a 'judicious Ear', because it 'flatters for a moment' but 'leaves nothing behind but disgust'.[22] In early September, Joseph received reports from England to the effect that all the finest singers in England had been engaged to perform Handel's *Messiah* in Westminster Abbey. For someone with his views this was welcome news indeed. In fact, by the time that he had read the announcement, the 1784 commemoration performances had already taken place. He awaited further details, and in the mean time continued to inveigh against modern taste: 'The noisy unmeaning modern music has destroyed all true taste. Perhaps I shou'd assign a better reason for it in the decay of Religion, for it is most certain no sublime pleasures can be derived from music without devotion.'[23] For those like Joseph, who viewed the decline in musical taste as a reflection of a perceived decline in religious belief, 'ancient' music was held to be *morally* superior in some way to the productions of modern composers. He thus read with interest the first detailed advertisements of the Handel commemorations, even keeping a newspaper cutting with the following letter:

Calcutta, 15 November 1784 Joseph Fowke to Margaret Fowke

I feel a great miss of Handels Overtures in 4 parts which I cou'd not avoid returning to Messink for his Amusements in the Voyage. The more I study this great Author the more I am smitten with his superiour excellencies. There is no end to the fertility of his imagination, and his judgement keeps pace with it. He is sublime whenever he chuses to be so, and is never trifling. In short he seems to have the whole world of harmony at

[21] BL, OIOC, Bengal Inventories, 1785, L/AG/34/27/6.
[22] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E5, 30. [23] Fowke MS E5, 50.

> his command, with an exact knowledge of the powers of every instrument which he never introduces but with effect. What a pity it is that he is so seldom executed with any tolerable degrees of correctness? In his own lifetime he was continually mortified by the want of steadiness and firmness in the performers, who were even then prone to run riot in the time. Being so favourite an Author of mine I am really made happy by the account of the Jubilee instituted to his memory this year in England which gives me hopes that sensible Music may revive. Westminster Abbey has been fitted up with the most superb decorations, and a new and stupendous Organ for the first nights performance, which was to consist of the most celebrated pieces detached from all his works, and to be honoured by the presence of the King and all the Royal family . . . The practice you have had in Corellis Music will lead you into a sense of Handel's excellencies, and prepare you for this great feast of the Soul. Music, as Plutarch well observed, first came from heaven, and Handel shows the way back to it.[24]

At the end of 1784, Calcutta had a new influx of performers, who brought with them the newest and most fashionable music. Joseph castigated them, one and all:

[Calcutta], 1 January 1785 Joseph Fowke to Margaret Fowke

> One Mr Mea has started up amongst us who is spoken of as a great Player upon the Violin. I heard him last night at Lady Chambers who is enraptur'd with his play. He has great execution, and a great Command of his Bow, plays very nonsensical music, out of tune, out of time, and without expression. We have likewise Mr Bright, a great Master of the Bassoon, plays Solos, plays anything, but does not blow so well in tune as Messink. The Masters at home are in the same way; They all learn to run before they can walk.[25]

He was at least pleased to learn that his daughter shared his taste for Handel: 'I am pleased to find by your letter that you have so good a Relish for Handel. Try some of Corelli's solos on the Harpsichord; they will give you pleasure.'[26]

The undue haste of modern performers was a constant refrain in Joseph's critique: 'The best hands I have heard have accellerated the time beyond the intention of the Authors.'[27] Joseph now revealed to his daughter that he had heard Handel perform organ concertos in his youth. He was born in 1716 and first left for India in 1736, and could thus have heard some of Handel's first public performances of the concertos in 1735. He returned to England in 1752 and might then also have heard Handel in some of his last performances:

Calcutta, 18 January 1785 Joseph Fowke to Margaret Fowke

> I have also sent you Handel's Organ Concertos in the same which I met with by accident. Altho not adapted to the Harpsichord I can listen to it with pleasure even upon that instrument; but as I know no better Organ Music I thought you might wish to be provided with Music for it upon occasion. Such as it is I beg your acceptance of it. Take notice that in Handel's C time allegro the crotchet may be nearly valued by the beat of an old Man's Pulse. Perhaps the Harpsichord may require some acceleration but there is some danger of your getting a habit of playing it too fast for the Organ. I have a

[24] Fowke MS E5, 53. [25] Fowke MS E5, 59. [26] Ibid. [27] Fowke MS E5, 5.

perfect remembrance of Handel's manner, whose greatest beauty in these movements was a very even finger; so that in the subdivisions the semiquavers were precisely of the same value.[28]

By now the reviews of the commemoration concerts were to hand, and Joseph read them avidly:

Calcutta, 18 August 1785 Joseph Fowke to Francis Fowke

Stone has for sale Handel's Overtures in 4 parts for Chamber Concerts; if you shou'd incline to purchase them, I will buy the use of them for a few months till a set of my own arrives which I expect by the Surprit—Stone has been sadly abused for letting you have Handels Songs in parts when there were no other Set to be had in the place. Tilghman was present at the grand performance of Handel's Oratorios and other pieces in Westminster Abbey, and he says it is impossible for imagination to conceive any thing so sublime. When the Kettledrums sounded, it was like a general discharge of Cannon, and he frequently jumped involuntarily from his seat. However my own opinion is that the multitude of Instruments and Voices were disproportioned to the Organs of hearing which may account for several ladies fainting away. The spectacle was equally magnificent with the performance. Tilghman speaks in raptures of the music, and concludes with a Eulogium on the nonsensical compositions of that Prince of Coxcombs—Haydn—Fashion governs the world in music as it does in dress. Few regulate their taste on the unerring principles of Truth and good sense.[29]

So close are the views and attitudes expressed by Joseph to those in the *General History of the Science and Practice of Music* by Sir John Hawkins, published in 1776, that it is hard to believe that he did not own a copy. Certainly, several sets of the five-volume work were in circulation in Calcutta. In addition to the one owned by Messink, there was a set in the inventory of Lieutenant Henry Foules. Hawkins, much to the detriment of the sale of his own work, powerfully articulated many of the opinions espoused by Joseph Fowke. He inveighs against the 'noise' of modern music:

Of the instrumental music of the present day, notwithstanding the learning and abilities of many composers, the characteristics of it are noise without harmony, exemplified in the frittering of passages into notes, requiring such an instantaneous utterance, that thirty-two of them are frequently heard in the same time which it would take moderately to count four; and of this cast are the Symphonies, Periodical Overtures, Quartettos, Quintettos, and the rest of the trash daily obtruded on the world.[30]

A strong antipathy towards virtuosity is apparent, especially when displayed in the passage-work of modern solos and concertos, which are not only too fast, but immoderately high. Such works now contain passages that carry the melody beyond 'the utmost limits of the scale', indeed so high on the instrument that notes can no longer 'be distinctly articulated'. There are constant echoes of Joseph Fowke's views on brash, modern performers, and on the importance of moderation, as when he

[28] Fowke MS E5, 66. [29] Fowke MS E6A, 66.

[30] J. Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* (London: Novello, 1875), i, p. xxxv.

attempted to absolve his own daughter from the cardinal sin of unmusical virtuosity: 'You make a sensible display of your talents. "Nothing too much" was a sensible proverb among the Romans, and musicians shou'd always keep it in their head.'[31] An escape from these much-despised modern tastes lay in the existence of an accessible body of 'ancient' music, but even the potential pleasure of listening to this repertoire was regularly being diminished by the encroachment of inappropriate performing styles. Using almost exactly the same language as Joseph Fowke, Hawkins regrets that the actions of modern performers destroy 'the intention of the authors':

> It affords but small satisfaction to a lover of the art to reflect that the world is in possession of such instrumental compositions as those of Corelli, Bononcini, Geminiani, and Handel, when not one principal performer in ten has any relish of their excellencies, or can be prevailed on to execute them but with such a degree of unfeeling rapidity as to destroy their effect, and utterly to defeat the intention of the authors.[32]

Summing up his views, Hawkins claims that modern compositions abound in 'noise and clamour', and he refers in particular to the 'general uproar of a modern symphony'.[33]

Joseph Fowke also reflects the strong religious overtones in the writings of Hawkins, associating the lamentable state of modern music to the 'decay of religion'.[34] Both men identify 'fashion' as the source of the corruption. Strong support for this view came from the Evangelicals. In Annamarguerita Porter's 'Methodized Journal', 'we get an intimate glimpse of the social values that stimulated conservative musical tastes for old music among the people around her'.[35] She rejected the 'vain pleasures' of fashionable concerts, 'amusements of dissipation'. It is hardly surprising that Methodist support for the Concert of Antient Music was so strong. Hawkins concludes his work with a ringing declaration which might perfectly have expressed Joseph's views on the musical life of Calcutta: 'The love of pleasure is the offspring of affluence, and, in proportion as riches abound, not to be susceptible of fashionable pleasures is to be the subject of reproach.'[36] Weber has written of the 'disorientation' that underpinned the commitment of Hawkins and others to the canon,[37] but with Joseph Fowke, one even senses a degree of outright alienation from the modern musical world. To one distant and disaffected Anglo-Indian at least, news of the 1784 Handel Commemoration came as a wonderful tonic. To have lived to see Handel reinstated at the apex of English musical life, in the presence of the Head of the Church of England, the Defender of the Faith, and in her ancient Abbey, was a cause for optimism, giving hope of a restitution of an older and truer set of musical values.

Vocal music by 'ancient' composers was very popular in Calcutta, and it seems probable that the prevalence of undisguised expressions of patriotism often found in the songs of Purcell was a factor in its favourable reception. Margaret Fowke was

[31] Fowke MS E5, 30. [32] Hawkins, *A General History*, i, p. xxxvi. [33] Ibid. ii. 919.

[34] On the religious overtones in Hawkins's musical writings, see W. Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 208.

[35] Ibid. 166. [36] Hawkins, *A General History*, ii. 919. [37] Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics*, 213.

introduced to Purcell by members of the Calcutta Catch Club, and quickly developed an admiration for the composer, and a fair appreciation of his merits. The songs of Purcell and Handel performed by the amateur singers in the Fowke circle of musicians during the first half of 1783 included:

Purcell	
Don Quixote	Let the dreadful engines*
	Sing all ye Muses
	Genius of England
	From rosie bowers*
Indian Queen	Seek not to know
King Arthur	Fairest Isle*
Bess of Bedlam	From silent shades*
	When Myra sings*
	Let Cesar and Urania*
Handel	
L'allegro	Let me wander not unseen
Samson	Honour and Arms
Messiah	The trumpet shall sound
	Comfort ye my people

A high proportion of the Purcell songs performed in Fowke circles (those marked*) were subsequently praised by Burney in volume three of his *General History* (1789).[38] While this demonstrates the extent to which London taste was a significant influence even on detailed repertoire preferences in Calcutta, there are, nevertheless, resonances in many of the pieces well suited to an Indian context. An element in the reception of Purcell's music in England had long been its emotive appeal to patriotism. Dudley Rider heard a performance of 'Genius of England' and wrote in his diary that it was 'a noble song', with something 'very grand and sublime in it and fit to inspire courage'.[39] In India, the military aspect of the cult for Purcell was prominent, as was a certain sense that his works expressed imperialism.[40] Yet it was not so much an established empire that was being celebrated, as an enterprise still full of uncertainty. The jingoistic mood of the texts certainly seems well in tune with the uneasy situation of Calcutta at this point. It is too easy to assume from the later solidity of the Raj that Anglo-Indians already felt their position to be secure. There was the continuing (and seemingly unending) struggle with the French, and everywhere in the subcontinent could be seen the bloody results of the collapse of Mughal authority. Nor could it yet be claimed that the British presence in India enjoyed unequivocal support in London. Resentment against the wealth of returning 'nabobs' was intense, while the debate about the nature and extent of the British role in India raged around the controversial figure of Warren Hastings. It is perhaps half-

[38] Hawkins, *A General History*, ii. 392–4.

[39] R. Luckett, '"Or Rather our Musical Shakespeare": Charles Burney's Purcell', *Music in Eighteenth-Century England: Essays in Memory of Charles Cudworth*, ed. C. Hogwood and R. Luckett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 66.

[40] Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics*, 94.

hidden feelings of anxiety that were being addressed in the preference for fervent patriotic songs. In an Indian context, 'Genius of England' could be regarded a manifesto for Imperial Man:

Genius of England from thy pleasant bower, Arise and spread thy sacred wings. Guard, guard from foes the British State, Thou on whose smile does wait th'uncertain happy fate of monarchies and kings. Then follow brave boys to the wars. The Laurel you know's the prize. Who brings home the noblest scars looks finest in Celia's eyes. Then shake off the slothful ease. Let glory inspire your hearts. Remember a soldier in war and peace is the noblest of all other arts.

There are contemporary resonances here in abundance: the British position in India was indeed in the process of being 'spread'; constant vigilance was necessary against actions by the 'foes' of the enterprise; the fate of 'monarchies and kings', the nawabs of Bengal, was now in the gift of the Company; military might remained essential; yet the hard work of Company employees was also to be affirmed. In 'Sing all ye Muses', the arduous life of the fighting man is hymned in imagery extraordinarily redolent of recent Bengal history: 'Rich profit comes easy in cities of stone, but the gold is earned hard where the cannon do roar.' 'Fairest Isle, all isles excelling' represented the glorification of the distant homeland, the 'fav'rite Nation', while contempt for Indian military prowess found powerful expression in a favourite Handel song:

Honor and arms scorn such a foe, Though I could end thee at a blow; Poor victory to conquer thee or glory in thy overthrow! Vanquish a slave that is half slain. So mean a triumph I distain.

Arne's 'Rule Britannia' was of course frequently sung. For the Anglo-Indian community these songs celebrated security in a still very insecure situation, imperial values in a fledgling empire.

Another sub-genre of Purcell's *œuvre* much favoured in India was the 'mad' song. Again, the vogue for these pieces in Calcutta stemmed directly from London taste, as 'From rosie bowers' and 'From silent shades' were both standard concert pieces, sung regularly by Mara.[41] Even in 'mad' songs, there were local resonances in India. Although the high mortality rate suffered by Europeans was declining, nonetheless death, sometimes preceded by madness, was still a spectre to haunt the imagination of the Anglo-Indian.[42]

The Calcutta Catch Club

The rise of catch clubs in mid-eighteenth-century England stimulated the formation of a catch club in Calcutta, probably some time in the 1770s. Its members could

[41] Luckett, ' "Or Rather our Musical Shakespeare" ', 70.

[42] P. J. Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 219.

enjoy convivial evenings, including a meal, drinking, and catch singing. Alexander Mackrabie attended several meetings:

Mr Playtel you are to know is a great Singer. His voice is a Tenor or Counter Tenor, wonderfully extensive, and his Judgement equal to his Powers. Burgess is also a Musician and has a good voice. They sung Songs and Duets all the Afternoon; charming! charming! We are to have a Catch Party at a Tavern on Tuesday.

The meeting did not disappoint:

Evening. At the Tavern—Naughty Boys again! Eating, drinking and singing Catches till three o'Clock in the morning. Oliver was with us. He has got quite well again and sung several songs. We were all in Harmonics.[43]

By their very nature, catch clubs tended to focus around political interest groups. Mackrabie attended an entertainment organized by Barwell and Impey, the leaders of a faction opposed to his own group. He was unimpressed:

Entre nous, the Evening was stupid enough, and the supper detestable; great joints of roasted Goat, with endless dishes of cold Fish. With respect to Conversation, we have had three or four Songs schreeched to unknown Tunes, the Ladies regaled with Cherry Brandy, and we pelted each other with Bred Pills, a la mode de Bengal.

An interesting feature of the Calcutta Catch Club was its strong association with supporters of 'ancient' music. According to Hickey, it was founded because of the disrespectful manner in which this repertoire was being heard in the main concert series:

Soon after my return to town I was elected a member of the Catch Club, one of the pleasantest societies I ever belonged to, but unpopular with the ladies, no female being admitted. It was originally established by some musical men, seceders from a meeting called the Harmonic, at which the younger people of both sexes being pleased with their own rattling chatter and noise, paid no attention to the sweet strains of Corelli and other famous composers and thereby gave grave offence to the real lovers of music. A party thereupon resolved to establish a sort of club, where none of the profane should gain admittance and women be excluded altogether. This was the society to which I was admitted, and a delightful thing it proved. I was also a member of the old Harmonic, which, upon the establishment of the new one, sunk into a mere dance. The young women facetiously termed the new meeting, 'The He Harmonic'. The latter commenced at seven and ended at half past nine. Precisely at ten we sat down to an excellent supper, after which catches, glees and single songs were kept up until a late hour. Amongst the party were several uncommon fine voices, especially Mr Platel, a member of Lord Sandwich's celebrated Catch Club, Messrs. Golding, Haynes, Messinck, and Playdell, all of whom sung with extraordinary taste and execution . . . The number of members was limited to twenty-five, and so popular did the club become that there were seldom less than fifty candidates to fill up any vacancy that occurred.[44]

[43] BL, OIOC, Francis MS E15; 29 Oct. 1775.

[44] *Memoirs of William Hickey*, ed. A. Spencer, 4 vols. (London, 1914–1925), ii. 162–3.

Hickey's mention of Lord Sandwich shows that, like many other such societies, the Calcutta club was modelled upon the Noblemen's and Gentlemen's Catch Club, founded in 1761.[45]

The attempt to exclude women from the Calcutta Catch Club and the grounds upon which the action was taken bring into focus the question of gender in relation to 'ancient' music. Among Anglo-Indian women were a number of ardent admirers of the music of Handel, yet the particular association of this repertoire with 'male' values comes across more clearly in Calcutta. Weber has written of the 'patriarchal focus' of the Concert of Antient Music, the most prestigious of the organizations promoting old music in London. This was more a matter of tone than the make-up of the audience; of the 221 subscribers in 1782, 57 per cent were men. Of more significance, the directors were always men. The division of responsibility for concert series in London was thus much the same as it was in Calcutta, the distinction always being between learning and fashion: 'While men ran the Concert of Antient Music, women tended to play strong roles in benefit concerts, since such events were closely linked to fashion, consumption, and socializing. Women were on the front lines in these powerful new aspects of the society, but they did not take leadership in areas of formalized learning.'[46] Without specifying exactly what he meant, William Jones in his *Treatise on the Art of Music* (1784) praised the Concert of Antient Music for having preserved 'some of the finest compositions, and the *manly* [my italics] entertainment arising from the superior manner in which they have been performed'.[47] This may have been a dig at castrati, but the wider association of the repertoire with men is hinted at. Against the background of this identification of 'ancient' music with male taste, it comes as no surprise that Margaret Fowke's attitude to the performance of this repertoire in her musical soirées shows a distinct sense of unease; she attempted to marginalize it in her programmes, and the time she spent agonizing over questions of propriety in its texts is significant.

The formation of a men-only catch club in Calcutta was by no means only a question of promoting old repertoire, which continued to be heard also at public subscription concerts. It was also a recognition of the fact that some men and women held very different views on the manner in which music should be presented. Noise during concerts was becoming an issue of more widespread concern in the late eighteenth century. Fashionable concerts and operas were invariably accompanied by what Burney called 'a buz and murmur of conversation'. Such behaviour attracted some satirical comment. In Fanny Burney's *Cecilia*, the heroine attends a private rout, where the volume of conversation was so loud that she could scarcely hear the music. This did not prevent the ladies present from exclaiming from time to time '*What sweet music!*'[48] There is much evidence to suggest that the opposing attitude, an insistence upon silent attention during musical performance, first gained ground in musical societies, and in the context of reverence for 'ancient' music.

[45] Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics*, 147. [46] Ibid. 161. [47] Ibid. 202.

[48] S. McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 61.

Marsh recalled the struggle in Salisbury against what he terms 'chattertation'. At one meeting, 'some printed requisitions of Order & Silence were directed to be hung up, with the word *silence* so eminently conspicuous that it might be read from any part of the Room'.[49] In other societies, fines were imposed upon talkers and walkers.[50] In Calcutta, the issue became so contentious that it led to the split mentioned above. Distant echoes of the feud crop up in Margaret Fowke's letters. When reporting that Birch had succeeded Messink as President of the Calcutta Catch Club, she expressed fury at the fact that she had not been invited to any of its meetings, whereas the new president had been a regular guest at her soirées. There was also persistent friction about which organizations should take precedence in the weekly calendar of social events. Several disputes about clashes were briefly alluded to by Mackrabie, and this implies that the establishment of a men-only catch club was provoking women into retaliation, by organizing their own events—private vocal concerts or glee parties.

The Public Concert

The rise of the public concert has been central to much work on music in England during the eighteenth century. Because so little other evidence survives, newspaper advertisements are often the only significant source of information. Typically, a provincial subscription series is evaluated with reference to such factors as the quality, variety, and date of repertoire, the calibre of visiting performers, and the increase in scale and frequency of the concerts themselves. It has proved more difficult, however, to relate the growth of public concerts to the largely hidden activities of amateur musicians, music-lovers, and socialites, upon whose support subscription series and benefits depended. Thanks to the Fowkes, the private musical culture of Calcutta is well documented during the decade in which there were attempts to establish public series.

It was earlier suggested that even at their peak in the late 1780s, public subscription series in Calcutta barely crossed the threshold of viability. For compelling economic reasons, concert promoters had therefore to devise programmes that would appeal to as wide an audience as possible. No significant musical interest group could be ignored, and it was in particular necessary that the tastes of both men and women should be considered. Calcutta's concert programmes reflect this necessary coalition of interests. There are too few programmes from the early 1780s to enable any assessment to be made of general trends at this period. A single programme from one of Oehme's series demonstrates that the layout was the usual two-act format of the Professional Concert in London:

16 December 1785

Act I	
Sinfonia	Bach
Overture	Handel

49 Robins, 'John Marsh and Provincial Music Making', 99.

50 McVeigh, *Concert Life in London*, 62.

Concerto, flute	Graaf
Song	
Quintet	
Act II	
Sinfonia	Vanhall
Concerto, harpsichord	
Glee	
Finale, a martial Piece	

Haydn's symphonic music was beginning to make a significant impact. A reviewer of a benefit concert for the cellist Lebedeff noted that 'the Concert commenced with an Opera of Haydn's'.[51] Concert criticism is very rare in the Indian newspapers of the 1780s, and the little that there is has a distinctly provincial feel to it. On the occasion of Lebedeff's benefit the reviewer was anxious to establish the credentials of the performers through comparison with eminent musicians in London, none of whose recent performances could have been heard by anyone in Calcutta. Mrs Shee performed a pianoforte sonata 'which Schroeter himself would have heard with pleasure', while Lebedeff was perhaps to be ranked 'near Crosdill and Cervetto'.

In 1789, William Bird ran two series of six subscription concerts, for some of which full programmes were advertised. This is the only series for which enough detailed information survives to enable some evaluation of programming policy to be attempted. The published programmes are given in Appendix 3. Even on the limited evidence of this series, it is possible to characterize the culture of the public concert in Calcutta. Its most striking aspect is the absence of the virtuoso performer, in London a highly significant influence. Despite the growing prestige of orchestral and chamber music, led by the fashion for Haydn's symphonies and quartets, programmes were still focused on the performances of virtuoso instrumentalists, most commonly violinists and pianists, and the currently fashionable stars of Italian and English opera. To a significant extent, the *raison d'être* of the London concert was to provide a platform for the professional soloist, and although things were changing, this order of priorities was still observed in concert reviews. The provincial musical centre that most closely matched this pattern was Bath, to all intents and purposes a satellite of the London musical world, with its steady stream of visiting artists. In locations further afield or more difficult of access, concerts by visiting professionals of high calibre were correspondingly fewer. Calcutta represents the furthest end of this spectrum, so distant, indeed, that it was very rare for a travelling virtuoso to make an appearance merely to promote a concert. Lacking any input from professional soloists, Calcutta concerts derived their repertoire directly from amateur taste, which, in India at least, was dependent on the availability of printed music. In its formal layout, programme planning might follow the London pattern, but where a prestigious concert in the capital might feature a Viotti or a Pacchierotti, the Calcutta concert planner had to make do with the modest contributions of amateurs, to be found in the rather anonymous references to 'song', 'pianoforte', or 'glee', which

[51] *Calcutta Gazette*, 31 Dec. 1787.

fill out most of Bird's programmes. In effect the public concert functioned rather like a private society. Certainly, Bird's programmes represent a coalition of interests strikingly similar to that found in the Fowke household, 'ancient' string repertoire for Joseph, piano sonatas and glees for Margaret, and symphonic and chamber music for Francis. A careful balance between the old and the new is apparent in the even distribution of Handel and Haydn works to begin and end the acts. The regular performance of Haydn symphonies implies that an orchestra of some size was now available in Calcutta, made up of professionals with amateur assistance. In fact an advertisement for a benefit concert in 1791 claimed that a 'full band of 25 performers' would be available for the event.

A rare example of a benefit concert given by a travelling virtuoso, in this case a child prodigy, is the following:

Benefit Concert for Master Hummel

27 August 1789

Act I	
Sinfonia	Haydn
Italian Song, Master Hummel	Sarti
Trio, concertant, flute	Hummel
Concerto, French horn, Master Hummel	Punto
Sonata, forte piano, Master Hummel	Hullmandel
Act II	
Serenado, clarinet, horn, tenor, bass	Hummel
French song, Master Hummel	Gretry
Quartet	Pleyel
Concerto, forte piano, Master Hummel	Sterkell

Advertised as an 8-year-old (three years younger than his famous namesake currently touring Germany), Hummel showed an impressive versatility, singing in Italian and French, playing on the French horn and piano, and presenting his own chamber compositions. The boy made a great impression, playing at a number of private concerts as well. Sophia Plowden noted in her diary on 20 August: 'Supt at Mess Kyds—a concert there. Heard the Musical prodigy—a boy whose age they say is 8 years & 5 months play the 1st of Stirkel & a Concert on the Horn.'[52] With its clear focus on recent works, Hummel's programme effectively demonstrates the point that for all its ardent enthusiasm for the latest imported music from London, Calcutta was out of touch in this one significant respect—it had no first-hand contact with the latest fashionable performers.

A small number of detailed concert programmes published in the 1790s suggest that modern repertoire was increasingly favoured in benefit concerts, perhaps because 'ancient' music was increasingly to be heard in oratorio performances. A concert in 1791 made a point of identifying one item as having been recently brought out to India:

[52] BL, OIOC, Plowden MS F127/94.

Act I	
Symphony	Girowitz
Quartet, flute	Pleyel
Glee	
Forte Piano	
Concerto, cello,	Breval (brought out this season)
Act II	
Double concerto, flute and bassoon	
Forte Piano	
Glee	
Symphony	Pleyel.[53]

Certainly the inclusion of a symphony by Gyrowetz, who had composed for the Professional Concert in the 1790 season, points to an up-to-date knowledge of trends in London. The performance of Matthew Locke's *Macbeth*, presumably Boyce's 1770 version, in a concert in 1792, again reflects an awareness of London repertoire.[54]

The 1797 Handel Celebration

Throughout this study, the development of Calcutta's musical life has been characterized as provincial in character, reflecting, if at times faintly, the brilliance of London, the distant source of its culture. Certainly its performing institutions, catch club, high-society private concert, public subscription series, benefit concert, and oratorio, match exactly those of most English provincial centres, and musical tastes in the Anglo-Indian community followed no less closely those of the concert-going public in London. On one occasion, however, there was a deliberate attempt to stage a musical event in Calcutta that would proclaim the city's wider significance as the colonial capital of a very large regional area: that event was the Handel Celebration of 1797.

Low-key charity oratorio performances had been promoted in Calcutta throughout the 1780s. A performance of *Messiah* in 1786 was well received: 'The songs and recitatives would have been applauded on any theatre in Europe, and the management of the choruses exceeded every expectation. Equal praise is due to the instrumental performers, who entered perfectly into the spirit of the composer, and to a refined taste added the most correct execution.'[55] In 1792, parts of *Judas Maccabeus* were performed, with additional instrumental items, including symphonies by Pleyel and Haydn. The singers were recruited from the ranks of amateur musicians: a reviewer reported that it had been 'sung by a respectable number of ladies and gentlemen, with much taste and feeling'.[56]

For reasons that are not entirely clear, a decision was taken in 1797 to put on a

[53] *Calcutta Gazette*, 17 Nov. 1791.
[54] *Calcutta Gazette*, 13 Dec. 1792.
[55] *Calcutta Gazette*, 18 May 1786.
[56] *Calcutta Gazette*, 26 Apr. 1792.

Handel performance for charity on an altogether larger scale. There seems little doubt that it was the intention, so far as was practicable in India, to emulate the London performances of the 1780s. The considerable political significance of the 1784 Handel Commemoration, coming as it did at the end of the American War of Independence, has been assessed by Weber as follows: 'it became . . . a celebration of the end of crisis and the expression of hope for a harmonious new order.'[57] It certainly marked a turning-point in the reign of George III. As a piece of spectacular musical publicity, the event was without rival in the eighteenth century; it was widely discussed in England, and was reported throughout Europe. Both in Berlin and Vienna, attempts were made to emulate its success. Yet by the time of the constitutional crisis of 1789, the annual commemoration was losing impetus and in 1792 it was discontinued. Nevertheless, by presenting Handel's music as a large-scale national ritual, the commemorations of the 1780s had established a stereotype that would dominate performances of Handel oratorios in England for well over a century and a half.

News of the 1784 Commemoration had been greeted in Calcutta with undisguised enthusiasm by supporters of 'ancient' music, but there was no immediate attempt to stage an Indian version. Now, on 23 February 1797, the *Calcutta Gazette* announced a Handel selection for the benefit of the Free School. The tone of the advertisement supports the conclusion that an attempt was being made to replicate the London commemorations. There was an immediate emphasis on size. The orchestra, it was claimed, would consist of eighty performers, an unprecedented number for a city in which a band of twenty-five was considered unusually large. A review gives details:

> A greater number of performers than ever were assembled upon any other occasion, either in Calcutta, or as we believe, in any other part of India:
>
> 15 violins
> 6 violas
> 6 cellos
> 2 double basses
> 6 clarinets, & occasionally oboes
> 4 horns
> 6 bassoons
> 1 serpent
> 2 trumpets
> kettle drums
> bass drums
> an organ for the thorough bass
> 21 vocal performers.[58]

Double basses were relatively new to India. An advertisement for a benefit concert in 1791 had singled out for comment the fact that the orchestra was 'to be favoured

[57] Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics*, 223.

[58] *Calcutta Gazette*, 9 Mar. 1797.

with the assistance of a gentleman on the double bass', perhaps the first occasion on which the instrument had been available in India.[59] In its emphasis upon scale, the report of the performance closely resembles published accounts of the London events. Another obvious parallel was the emphasis upon the general conduct of the occasion. This was musical ritual of a kind new to India:

> About twenty five minutes past seven, the performers in one general movement walked into the orchestra, and took the several seats and stations which had been previously allotted to them. The Organ then gave the note, and one general tuning of the instruments commenced, which was expeditiously effected. A short pause ensued.

The reporter knew that he was describing something quite out of the ordinary. This was Calcutta, however, not London, and the ever-present problem of tuning could not be ignored:

> We were happy to observe, a Lady placed at the Piano Forte in front of the Orchestra, who considerably aided the general effect by her accompanyments to the voices, in several of the songs and recitatives; as it is difficult in this climate to keep the Organ so well and correctly in order, as to be in all cases suited to the more delicate parts of such a performance.

So successful was the performance that a second one was hurriedly arranged, which, however, was less well attended than the first. The *Calcutta Gazette* reporter went to extraordinary lengths to concoct convincing explanations for what was only a relative failure. The sudden arrival of ships from Europe had induced many people to go to meet friends and relatives, while others had been engaged in preparations for departure in view of the imminent dispatch of several ships to Europe. If the reviewer is to be believed, the Handel performances coincided with a major movement of East India Company shipping. As to why the second performance had to follow so closely upon the first, another explanation of the moderate audience, it was pointed out that some of the principal performers were about to quit Calcutta 'to repair to their several stations and employments in the country'. A strong impression is given that the reviewer felt that Calcutta's reputation as a city, which could stage a large musical event, had been brought into question. In part, this was a question of local supremacy; the point was made that by recruiting throughout Bengal, the necessary forces had been brought together, something that no other European settlement in the East was likely to be able to do. But there was also the question of the city's wider reputation. Calcutta was only one of many 'English' towns to stage large-scale Handel performances in the last decades of the eighteenth century. Derby, rather isolated and without a strong musical tradition, will make a useful comparison. Handel festivals were staged there in 1788 and 1793.[60] Leading performers from London, notably Mara and Cramer, attended, and there were 120 in the band. Reviewers praised the performances with a torrent of superlatives. What these large-scale provincial re-creations of the London commemorations had in

[59] *Calcutta Gazette*, 17 Mar. 1791.

[60] R. P. Sturges, 'Harmony and Good Company: the Emergence of Musical Performance in Eighteenth-Century Derby', *Music Review*, 39 (1978), 178–95.

common was that they were avowedly civic events. The steady enrichment of urban musical culture in the provinces needed a focal point, where the musical resources of a town could be put on display as a whole, and in a spirit of unity. In the same way that the national commemorations transcended political divisions, so the provincial Handel festivals provided a civic event, where young and old, men and women, professional and amateur, could come together. Rivalries would have to be set aside. (The incorporation of modern symphonic repertoire was a symbol of this all-inclusiveness.) What was at issue in these great events was not the quality of the performances, or the financial outcome for the designated charities, or even the social display of the audience (though all these were more than useful for the publicity machine), but the reputation of the town. With civic musical status at stake, reviewers in the local press tended to indulge in hyperbole, and there was an unusual degree of sensitivity to anything that might detract from the solemnity of the performance. Foreign singers (as Mara discovered) were well advised to behave with the utmost propriety. If the size of the audience was disappointing, as in Calcutta, attempts would be made to explain away the failure. Having put on display the musical resources of the city and achieved a modest success, it was hoped that other performances would follow, but there is no evidence that this happened.

5

The Encounter with Indian Music

The Kingdom of Oudh and the 'Hindostannie' Air

The background to the intense fashion for Indian songs and instruments that swept through Anglo-Indian society in the 1780s lies in the expansion of the East India Company's interests into the central and northern provinces of India. It is noteworthy that although Indian tunes were performed and published in Calcutta, they were rarely collected there. Calcutta was perceived as what it was—an English creation. To experience truly 'authentic' Indian culture, it was widely recognized that a journey inland would be necessary, and an ideal location existed—the kingdom of Oudh. A voyage of two or three months up the Ganges, at the leisurely tourist rate of progress, would bring the visitor to the historic cities of Benares and Lucknow, the Company's most important inland stations.[1] The strategic importance of the kingdom of Oudh grew even as the Mughal Empire waned. At first, the Company regarded Oudh as a valuable buffer state, which offered protection to its possessions in Bengal from the potentially serious threat posed by the Marathas. A delicate balance had to be maintained. Oudh needed to be strong enough to hold up the advance of an aggressor, yet not so strong as to pose a threat itself to the Company in Bengal. One solution was to maintain troops in the region, which the Company began to do during the reign of Shuja-ud-Daulah. His successor Asuf-ud-Daulah was a weaker ruler, who came to be regarded by the English as a libertine with no aptitude for serious government. Company officials thus began to assume a much more active role in ordering the affairs of state. The maintenance of a public show of good relations was now regarded as a top priority, and social intercourse with the Indian nabob and his chief ministers became an important symbol of policy.

Coincidentally with its rise in importance in the strategic affairs of the Company, Lucknow was beginning to emerge as one of the most vigorous musical centres in India. The cause of this was the movement of musicians away from the once dominant centres of Mughal power. Following the death of Mohammed Shah in 1748,

[1] C. C. Davies, *Warren Hastings and Oudh* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939).

there was an exodus of musicians out of Delhi to Oudh, first to Faizabad and then to Lucknow, where the nawabs enjoyed a growing reputation as patrons of culture.[2] There were further influxes from Kashmir and from the Afghan inhabitants of Rohilkhand. As a direct result of their having set up inland residencies in Oudh, the English were thus introduced to a wide range of northern Indian musical cultures. Actual contact with Indian musicians came as a result of invitations to attend social functions at the Indian court, which were usually accompanied by lavish displays of music and dancing. Invitations were frequent, and meetings seem to have been conducted in a cordial spirit.

A most interesting source of evidence concerning the part that music played in these social encounters is to be found in a diary kept by Sophia Plowden, during her residence in the city in 1787–8.[3] Despite its laconic style, there are tantalizing glimpses of the music performed on such occasions. It features a colourful cast of characters: Mr Ives, the Company Resident in Lucknow and his wife, an amateur musician of evidently dubious distinction; Mr Bellas, who spent much time transcribing and arranging Indian tunes; John Braganza, a musician, who is named as the copyist of Plowden's own collection of 'Hindostannie' airs;[4] William Hamilton Bird, who first published a set of Hindostannie Airs; the Nawab of Oudh, Asuf-ud-Daulah; his chief minister Hydr Beg Khan; Zoffany the artist; the Swiss orientalist, Colonel Anthony Polier; and a leading Kashmirian singer, Khanam:

8 February

Mr P. went with Mr Gregory to a Cockfight at the Nabobs. Took little Chicheley [Sophia Plowden's son]. The Nabob gave him some play things.

10 February
We had Moraad Baxes Set and Khannam to Notch in the Evening. Hassan Razer [Hasan Riza Khan] excused himself.

18 February
Went this morning to . . . Hydr Beg Khawns . . . the Nobat was sounded. Hydr Beg met Mrs Ives at the Door and handed her in. Mr Ives handed me . . . [description of the room—breakfast on the occasion of the marriage of Hydr Beg's daughter—jewels presented to the ladies on their departure] During the time of breakfast we were entertained with a Notch. The Notch Women all well dress'd but most ugly and some very fat and old, but they were favorites at court and their voices were held in estimation, but as they only sang Tappas, a sort of Wild harsh music without any air I was not much pleas'd. There were about 20 Sets.

3 March
Spent the Evening at Mr Ives's. The Nabob and his Court there . . . Mrs Ives playd the harpsichord and sung to entertain his Highness. He ask'd for a Persian Song and I sang one. There were present his two Ministers, Hyder Beg and Hassan Razer Khawn, the Nabob's three Brothers, Merza Jungley . . .

[2] J. Kippen, *The Tabla of Lucknow* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 16.

[3] BL, OIOC, Plowden MS F127/94.

[4] R. Llewellyn-Jones, *A Fatal Friendship: The Nawabs, the British, and the City of Lucknow* (Oxford, 1985), 27.

18 September
Went with the Ives family to Breakfast with the Nawab . . . [marriage of his daughter] The entertainment as usual Notching. I desired them to sing the song of 'Jo. Kashmere Levy Allum Deaktey'. His excellency told us the Poetry of this Song was his own composition. As I had not a correct copy, I sent Merza Golam Hasseen to request permission of sending my [?] to the Nawabs Island for a Copy. The Nawab said he would repeat the words to the Merza [?] who could write them down if I pleased.

The most surprising message of these extracts is that music itself was a subject of discourse between Indians and English residents. There were requests to hear specific pieces, and on one occasion the Indian nawab was obliging enough to assist Plowden in her quest for material. For their part, Indians were invited to English-style concert parties. Warren Hastings clearly approved of such encounters. Thanking Margaret Fowke for her part in one of them, he implied that the taste and decorum of such events might even have political benefits, by impressing high-ranking Indian visitors.[5] Englishmen, perhaps having the better part of the bargain, became used to joining in tiger hunts, betting on cock fights, watching elephants tussle, and above all experiencing the exotic delights of nautch dancers. Such was the heady blend of opulence, vice, and good sport that Lucknow began to attract free-lance adventurers of whom the most celebrated was General Claud Martin.[6]

The vogue for Indian music was clearly related to a much wider European phenomenon, the cult of the picturesque. Originally a movement in opposition to the formal, classical concept of the garden, the picturesque movement had broadened to include a fascination with anything colourful or exotic in the natural or human worlds.[7] Majestic scenery and extraordinary natural phenomena such as the Giant's Causeway in County Antrim were beginning to attract widespread attention. Unfamiliar cultures (including some like the Irish that had hitherto been treated with scorn) were increasingly perceived as fruitful sources of exotic experience. Even barbarity, when viewed by the inquisitive traveller from a safe distance, could produce a kind of vicarious thrill. The most important musical expression of this movement came with the rapid growth of interest in 'national airs'. The impact in England was considerable. Scottish and Irish airs were transcribed, edited, arranged and borrowed as themes for rondo movements in countless numbers. Major composers such as Haydn and Beethoven provided settings for an enterprising publisher. Continental travel began to make a wide range of European folk traditions accessible. Passing through Switzerland on her European tour, Margaret Fowke recorded her impressions of what she heard:

Zurich, n.d. [1788] Margaret Benn to Francis Fowke

> There is so little to be seen in this country except the beauties of nature that I willingly spent my mornings at home . . . I am told that the Swiss are remarkably fond of music, and that many of the peasants play and sing music in parts very correctly . . . The wife

[5] BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/25, 1.
[6] S. C. Hill, *Life of Claud Martin* (London and Calcutta: Thacker & Spink, 1901).
[7] M. Archer, *Indian Painting for the British, 1770–1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955).

> of our inn-keeper sung in a very agreeable manner some Swiss airs composed by a peasant in the Canton—they are plaintive, elegant, and much in the Italian style. The words are German, and the sound of the gutterals in singing is strikingly disagreeable. The Swiss songs are generally in praise of their heroes and warriors—not of their beauties—sometimes they celebrate a favorite spot among the mountains.[8]

With the growth of the Empire, more distant musical cultures came within reach. Attitudes remained the same, but the problems of transfer were greatly magnified. The essential difference between the 'Hindostannie' air and the 'Scotch' air is not the more distant location of the former but the remoteness of its musical culture from anything hitherto experienced by Europeans.

The 'picturesque' movement found its most obvious expression in the collections of drawings and paintings of Indian life, which were collected avidly, especially by women. Zoffany's activities in Lucknow are well attested. He was in great demand, not just as a portrait painter, but for his interpretations of Indian life. On 30 March 1785, Francis Fowke reported to his sister on the artist's recent activities:

> Most of Zoffany's pictures are gone home. The cockpit remains unfinished but admirable as far as it is done. Mr Hastings from which the print is taken I think the worst. There is another of him and Madam w^{ch} are both striking. Iewan Bute I was absolutely startled at, and Lady C's Fanny is an enchanting child. Zoffany says he shall certainly come up in May and stay some months at Benares.[9]

Musical instruments were an obvious source of exotic local colour. Margaret made arrangements to have Indian instruments drawn by an Indian artist.[10] Her brother, meanwhile, admired another set of drawings: 'The day I was at Baglepore I saw all Davies's drawings, and was very much delighted with them. Those of Bootan [Bhutan] are extremely curious and picturesque—I regret much not having seen three that Mr Hastings carried home. These are left to be finished.'[11]

A beautiful set of miniatures commissioned by Sophia Plowden are still extant in the Fitzwilliam Museum, perhaps the most brilliant legacy of the fashion for the 'Hindostannie' air. It consists of a volume of seventy-seven pieces, mostly untitled, together with thirty-nine loose sheets containing the titles and words of songs. A note in a nineteenth-century hand explains that the songs were collected by Sophia Plowden during 1786 (actually 1787–8) from the songs of 'Khannum, Dile Sooth (?), Morade (?) Bux, Higinay (?), Kareem Bux, Noñal, Asaph al (?) Dowla and Colonel Polier'. The note goes on to say that the borders were designed by her and executed by Indian artists. The words of the songs were collected by her Moonshee and the music 'fairly written' by John Braganza. Numerous musical instruments are depicted. Because the date and place of this manuscript's compilation are known, the musical depictions form a valuable complement to the much better known Solvyn pictures.[12]

[8] Ormathwaite MS D546/31, 130.

[9] Ormathwaite MS D546/26, 1.

[10] BL, OIOC, Fowke MSS E4, 556 and E9, 144.

[11] Ormathwaite MS D546/26; 10 Apr. 1785.

[12] R. L. Hardgrave Jr. and M. Slawek, 'Instruments and Music Culture in Eighteenth Century India: The Solvyn Portraits', *Asian Music*, 20 (1988), 1–92.

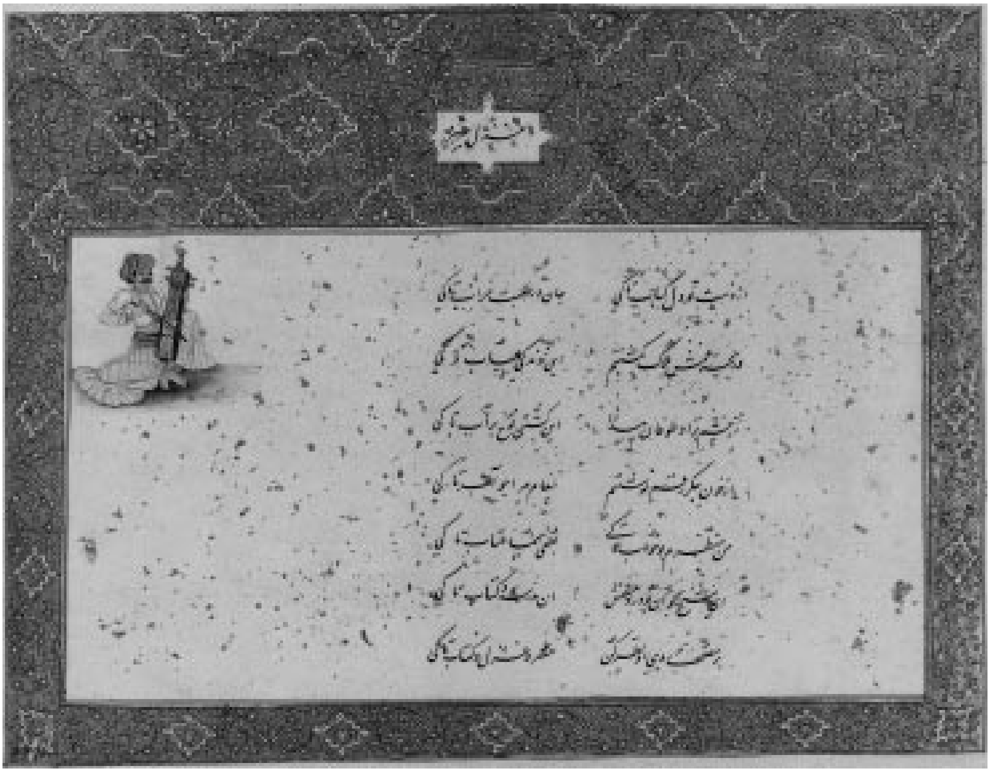


Plate 5. Anon, Indian Artist in Lucknow, *A Four-String Sarangi*, *c.* 1787

The desire to 'collect' authentic Indian artefacts extended well beyond art-works. Englishwomen commissioned Indian-style dresses and sets of dolls representing selections of local 'characters' were much prized:

Calcutta, 30 August 1784 Sophia Plowden to Margaret Fowke

> I have a second favor to ask—it is to get me a few Dolls dress'd in different Characters—a Notch group or any thing of that kind that you fancy. They are to send to my little Sophia—the smaller they are [the] better.[13]

Much the most interesting manifestation of this desire to possess Indian objects was the 'Hindostannie' air. The fashion for these short pieces, derived from Indian originals but arranged in a European idiom, coincided exactly with other expressions of the picturesque movement in India. Indeed, the strong impression is given, that all the various elements, paintings, miniatures, dresses, dolls, and Indian tunes, were part of a fashionable cultural package, which catered recognizably for the tastes of women. Although men could enjoy the products, and, as we shall see, assisted in

[13] Fowke MS E5, 44.



Plate 6. Anon, Indian Artist in Lucknow, *Tabla*, *c.* 1787

technical and linguistic areas outside the normal competence of women, there is no doubt that women were the prime movers. Two individuals in particular, Sophia Plowden and Margaret Fowke, took the lead in establishing the vogue for 'Hindostannie' airs in the 1780s.

Star Performers from Kashmir

There can be little doubt that the leading performers of 'nautch' groups were the source of the Indian tunes collected by the English devotees. At the height of the enthusiasm for Indian culture in the 1780s, nautch sets were invited regularly into English homes, starting a tradition that persisted into the nineteenth century. So popular did these dancing groups become, that the term 'nautch' or 'notch' entered the Anglo-Indian vocabulary, both as a noun and a verb. Looking back on the period, Captain Thomas Williamson recalled that in the years 1778 to 1785 'the prime sets of dancing girls quitted the cities, and repaired to the several cantonments

[English military settlements] where they met with the most liberal encouragement'.[14] He viewed this movement partly as a consequence of the withdrawal of Indian patronage, but also as a direct consequence of 'the great influx of young officers' during these years. Such was the change in the pattern of patronage that some 'sets' entered the formal employment of Englishmen such as Warren Hastings. What is remarkable is not so much that musicians of this type were used, but that they were accorded something akin to 'star' status by their foreign patrons. In a letter to her friend, Sophia Plowden gave interesting details of the 'star' performers in the leading nautch group as she remembered them from her recent stay in Oudh:

Calcutta, 4 December 1783 Sophia Plowden to Margaret Fowke

> You tell me you have had Notches but do not say if you lik'd them, or if you have seen any capital performers. I fear the remains of the Cashmeerian set (after what I had said of them) fell infinitely short of your expectations, because they have been for these twelve months past almost upon a par with others that you may meet with. The first singer and dancer of the set whom the gentlemen used to call Tawnée died soon after we left Lucknow, and her remains are interr'd at the bottom of the garden belonging to our House. There was also a pretty woman by the name of Gool buddam who was second best, and she some time ago eloped with an officer. Those remaining are very inferior in every respect and the set is but the ghost of what it was. The best singer left is a very ugly woman whom Trevor Wheler used to call the 'Nags Head' as he thought she resembled a Horse. Have you added to my collection of Songs? I have great *dependence* on you and hope you will not forget your promise.[15]

Plowden was perfectly prepared to rank Indian performers according to their ability; the best set from Kashmir had a 'star' performer, a good replacement, but a rump of indifferent artistes deserving of contempt. It is possible that the criteria for making such judgements derived from Indian rankings, but there may well have been other factors. Particularly noteworthy is the openness with which she recognized that men had very different motives for their interest in these singers. Yet the fact that nautch musicians were manifestly objects of sexual desire to East India Company army officers seems not in any way to have affected their status as fashionable singing stars for women collectors of Indian music. The absolute social rejection of the Indian mistress by Englishwomen was as yet not a factor. For a short period at least the heady blend of sexual temptation and musical fascination combined to provide a potent attraction, and it is entirely possible that musical rankings developed by women were affected by criteria of more interest to men, youth or physical beauty. Sophia Plowden's regard for the leading singer of her group led her to give permission for her body to be interred in her garden—a most unusual 'honour'.

By 1787, a singer called Khanam, again a Kashmirian woman, had acquired a formidable reputation. The extent to which this woman was sought by her English patrons is very evident from the Plowden diary:

[14] T. Williamson, *The European in India* (London, 1813), commentary to plate 15.

[15] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E5, 9.

1787

23 December
Had a Notch. Morade Bax and Khanam's Sett . . . She sings the Cashmerian airs and dances these dances in the best stile.

24 December
Dined at Mr Orrs. Had Khannam's Set to Notch in the Evening. Mr Orr gave me a bouquet from his Garden that reminded me of England—composed of Wall flowers, Stocks.

1788

11 February
At home. Gentlemen in the Evening. Khannem this morning took leave as she is going to Cawnpore. Bellas wrote down a Persian song.

22 February
Shaw Kannoms brother arrived from Calcutta.

6 April
Bellas spent the day at Ives. Not seen her [Khannam] for upwards of a week. She says she has been ill.

21 April
Mr Zoffany began Shaw Khannon's picture for me.

26 April
Mr Taylor told me I should not have the picture that Zoffany was drawing of Shaw Khanam but another done to my order.

29 April
They talked over the business of the picture of Shaw Khannam.

20 September
Did not see Bellas. Wrote out songs with the [?] all the morning . . . Mr Robinson told me Mr McCullock had not yet been able to procure Khanom to sing the [?] songs which I wanted.[16]

Plowden evidently followed the career of this singer with great assiduity, noting her arrivals, departures, illnesses, and availability for engagements. She was hoping to obtain a portrait from Zoffany, but the one that he was working on was already reserved. Her admiration for this woman's artistic ability, and her fascination with what can only have been an 'exotic' personal life-style, is strikingly reminiscent of contemporary English attitudes to leading operatic castrati, who were treated with sycophancy by their upper-class women admirers.

Although 'khanum' was probably used as a generic term for such nautch singers, there is some reason to believe that the individual employed by Plowden was indeed the mistress of an English officer. The accounts in 1787 of a recently deceased lieutenant, one P. Herbert, include regular monthly payments to 'Kaunaum' or 'Kannum' (the spelling varies widely) and numerous extra gifts, Patna shoes, gold hand jewels, a string of pearls—the usual accoutrements of an Indian mistress—together with occasional payments for housing and travel.[17] Any reputation that she may

[16] BL, OIOC, Plowden MS F127/94.

[17] BL, OIOC, Bengal Inventories L/AG/34/27/8.

have had as a courtesan, however, was overridden by her status as a fashionable artist.

Further evidence of the reputation of this woman comes in a humorous poem, written at Cawnpore *c.*1786.[18] It is couched in the jocular language of the barracks, and is full of irrecoverable personal allusions. Nonetheless, her extraordinary personal magnetism is plain enough:

A Song on the Departure of Connum from Cawnpore (by G—d)

Let others of Tippoo hard-hearted complain
Of our losses by land, our defeats on the main;
Another, but much greater loss, I deplore,
I mean the late loss we've sustained at Cawnpore.
How sweetly of late did our time pass along
With a Nautch from Connum, from Connum a Song;
And who to lament will deny we have cause?
For Connum is going—Weep, weep Shawke'aws!*
Poor Davis! But why should I tell you his case,
His grief is depicted too plain in his face;
Bereft of his colour, his watch and his pelf [booty],
He admir'd the dear girl near as much as him self.
There's Morris too swears 'tis a terrible bore —
When the Connum is gone—who'd remain at Cawnpore?
Gets remov'd in an instant, to cure his despair,
To friendship, goodhumour and mirth with Charles Ware.
'That pause in the music—how noble how fine!'
Cries Stokoe entranc'd—tho' he can't hear a line,**
Bon honour cries St George—'Conn improves every day
I'll nautch all next week—any news of the pay?'

* The Name of a Club.
** Stokoe is deaf.

According to Dean Mahomet, some of these singers did very well financially: 'Some of the principal Nabobs and European gentlemen of the first distinction are drawn by the lure of pleasure, and lavish immense sums on these creatures.' He tells the story of a dancing girl, living with a rich factor, who had sufficient resources of her own to enable her to bail him out when he was facing imminent bankruptcy.[19] The near legendary status of Khanum was later reported by Captain Williamson. Writing in a period when attitudes towards Indian musicians were much less favourable, he recalled the extraordinary personal magnetism of the woman while professing himself unable to account for her popularity with English army officers:

Then the celebrated Kaunum was in the zenith of her glory! Those who did not witness the dominion she held over a numerous train of abject followers, would never credit that a

[18] NLW, Aberystwyth, Ormathwaite MS FB3.
[19] M. H. Fisher, *The Travels of Dean Mahomet: An Eighteenth-Century Journey through India* (Berkeley, California, and London: University of California Press, 1997), 51.

haughty, ugly, filthy, black woman could, solely by the grace of her motions, and the novelty of some Cashmerian airs, hold in complete subjection, and render absolutely tributary, many scores of fine young British officers! Nay, even the more discreet and experienced, many of whom could not, with propriety, say 'Time has not thinned my flowing hair, nor bent me with his iron hand', were found among the most fervent of the proud Kaunum's admirers.[20]

According to Williamson, her career came to an end when 'the Auditor-General's red ink negatives dissolved the charm'. Once Khanam had retired, 'the various sets of inferior consideration speedily sunk into neglect'. Upon his return to England, Williamson himself published two collections of Indian airs. His Opus 4 collection, *Twelve Original Hindostannie Airs* (London, *c.*1800) pays appropriate homage to the celebrated singer by including 'A Song of Kannum's' and 'A Dancing Tune of Kannum's'. The debate over the morals of nautch dancers became more intense in the nineteenth century. Some sections of English opinion continued to regard their activities as merely cultural; others campaigned against them as a potent source of sexual temptation.[21]

Khanum's Kashmerian ethnic identity was a significant element in her reception. Interest in regional variation, in local colour, was characteristic of the 'picturesque' movement as a whole. Certainly, the geographical origins of Indian songs and singers is a recurrent theme. In Lucknow during the 1780s, the top Kashmirian singers obviously enjoyed star status, and the region of Rohilkhand to the north-west of Oudh was also identified as a valuable source of music. In the introduction to his *Oriental Miscellany* of 1789, the first published collection of Indian arrangements, Bird identifies both these regions as producing 'particularly perfect and regular' airs, but even these relatively straightforward pieces need in performance 'the grace of a Chanam (a famous Woman singer), and the expression of a Dillsook (a Male singer of great eminence)' to make them pleasing. This reference to a male singer, who was also named in the Plowden diary as a source, together with Margaret Fowke's clear statement that she collected from male singers, shows that songs were not exclusively taken from the repertoire of women singers like Khanam. Yet Bird's pieces were predominantly of genres associated with nautch dancers, such as the 'rekhtah' and the 'tuppah'. The 'rekhtah' is a love-song written from the woman's point of view, and the 'tuppa' [tappa] was likewise a genre sung by nautch sets. Sophia Plowden reported that the 'Notch women' at Asuf-ud-Daulah's court 'only sang Tappas, a sort of Wild harsh music without any air'. By contrast, Bird included only one 'raagnie' [ragini], a genre 'impossible to bring . . . into a form for performance by any singers but those of their country', and relatively few 'teranas', 'sung by men only'.

[20] Williamson, *The European in India*, commentary to plate 15.

[21] K. Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex and Class under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and their Critics, 1793–1905* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1980).

The Art of Transcription

Given the fundamentally different melodic and rhythmic systems of Indian music, to say nothing of instruments and performing styles, the avowed aim of producing 'authentic' versions of the originals was destined to fail. But the attempt raises interesting questions. It will be interesting, for example, to consider the extent to which European transcribers made use of elements of their own musical vocabulary, not normally associated with short salon pieces, for example, drones, parallel writing, and unusual key signatures. Moreover, given that the results were usually claimed as 'authentic' representations of the original Indian songs, there must have been some understood criteria by which this authenticity was perceived or evaluated. It is reasonable to assume that the repertoire was to some extent already familiar to English collectors from repeated hearings at 'nautch' sessions. Clear evidence of this comes in the fact that collectors often requested individual songs by name. In order to 'collect' a song, that is, to have it transcribed into European notation, an Indian performer would be invited for a session in the home, that is, on European 'ground', where the all-important keyboard instrument was available. From the point of view of any women amateur, a harpsichord or a pianoforte was the natural choice of instrument upon which to perform or accompany Indian airs. In all other respects, however, keyboard instruments were singularly ill-suited to this attempt to transfer melodic material from one culture to another. Liable to collapse at any moment, impossible to keep in tune, and, above all, with a notionally pre-ordained temperament, harpsichords and pianofortes had no quality that suited them to this task. Even a violinist could at least attempt to replicate an unfamiliar scale. Yet keyboard instruments were not only the ultimate recipients of this repertoire, they stood, unyieldingly, at the crucial intersection between the music of the two cultures, the moment of transcription itself. For the purposes of performing for a transcriber, it would have been sufficient for the star performer to come alone without accompanists; it would merely be necessary to ascertain beforehand that the songs to be transcribed were in her repertoire. Linguists would be required only if the intention was to make songs, but in most cases the easier option of turning the Indian melodies into keyboard pieces was taken.

As a case study of the activities of a collector, it may be useful to take Margaret Fowke, whose personal involvement in transcribing songs is remarkable. In attempting to 'take down' the airs herself, she went far beyond what would normally have been expected of a woman, and it demonstrates a typical independence of mind on her part. In doing this, she crossed the boundaries of convention, which dictated that women concerned themselves with the fashionable and the artistic, men with the technical. Little wonder that her friend Sophia Plowden, who always relied on the assistance of male professional musicians to make her transcriptions, was so amazed: 'how you could note them down so correctly I cannot conceive.'[22] This

[22] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E5, 76.

was simply something that a woman amateur would not normally countenance doing.

Margaret set about collecting material systematically only after she had moved to Benares. In a letter written at her father's request, to be forwarded to Lady Clive in London, she gave fascinating details of her project:

Benares, 11 January 1785 Margaret Fowke to Joseph Fowke

[copy made by Joseph Fowke and sent to Lady Clive 28 July 1785]

I have now the pleasure of enclosing you a Copy of some Indostaun Airs. You may be assured they are exact, and to me they are pretty. Notwithstanding this I cannot be quite clear that they will please you; for notes cannot express Style, and that of these airs is very peculiar and new. I have often made the Musicians tune their instruments to the harpsichord that I might join their little band. They always seemed delighted with the accompaniment of the harpsichord and sung with uncommon animation, and a pleasure to themselves, which was expressed in their faces. There is a great deal of vivacity in the second and fourth of these Songs, which you know is not very usual in the Music of this Country. The subject of them is the hindoo holidays, called the Hooley, and they are an invitation to join in the general rejoicing. The 3^d Song is an address from one of the Gopia (nine ladies whom Sir William Jones supposes to be Grecian Muses) to Krishen or Cishna. Krishen is one of the favourite gods of the Hindoos. He is much more lively than his adorers; for he is passionately fond of dancing, and is always represented with a flute. He is so completely accomplished that Sir William is convinced he is Apollo himself. He takes notice of him in his hymn to the Hindoo God of Love:

Can men resist thy power when Krishnen yields,
Krishnen, who still in Matra's holy fields,
Tunes harps immortal, and to Strains divine
Dances by moonlight with the Gopia nine?

This 3^d Song which you will observe is in the minor key is original, wild, tender, and passionate in a very great degree, and I am inclined to give it the preference in this little collection. The fifth and sixth are two plaintive little airs, in which there are great delicacy and expression. They are both sung by women. The first intreating her husband not to forget her in the splendid scenes he is going to be engaged in, and the second begging him to suffer her to be the partner of his travels. I am promised a poetical translation of these lines by Sir William Jones. They are in the Birgi language, in which there is in my opinion great softness. It is spoken near Agra. Sir William's Moonshy understands it and will give the sense to him in Persian.

I have said nothing of the first song, because tho the melody is pretty enough, there is neither the same expression or original Turns that are to be found in the rest. You desire to know if the Musicians of Indostan appear to be acquainted with music in parts. Those that I have heard certainly are not. The Governor's little Band from whom I took down these airs consisted of Three Singers; two performers with a kind of large guittar, and their usual accompaniment of drums. One of the Singers often raised his voice an octave above the others, which made his own a feigned one. The strings of the Guittar were all tuned in unison. Through the whole air they continue sweeping these strings which produces an uninterrupted Buz, resembling that of an insect which I have

often met with. They merely sound the open strings of this instrument, so that you hear nothing but the key note through the whole air. By this account you see there is nothing like harmony in their music. This Guittar is in my opinion a miserable accompaniment, and I really think the Hindostannie band deserves a better. As I believe they came from Agra, Krishen's favourite resort, I wish they had stolen some of his *immortal harps*. These airs are undoubtedly Hindostannie—not Persian, of which I have yet had no opportunity of collecting any. Mr Hastings's Musicians were only acquainted with the music of Hindostan to which he is himself most partial, and in which his Judgement is critically exact.[23]

Throughout the whole process Indian musicians seem to have been expected to adapt, as far as was possible, to European conventions. Margaret Fowke's method was to get the Indian musicians to tune to her harpsichord so that she could 'play along'. This would of course have destroyed at a stroke the intonation system, but, given the intractable problems of keeping European keyboard instruments in tune and the dismal tuning skills of Europeans in India, professional and amateur alike, it cannot be assumed that any consistent European system was substituted. In reality there was no other option. Exactly the same compromise was required of the Indian musicians employed by Englishmen in their quasi-scientific investigations of Indian instruments and playing techniques. From Margaret's description, the 'band' consisted of singers, drummers, and a *tambura* player. Like many Europeans, she could recognize the melodic basis of Indian music, the drone, and the absence of harmony. Another noteworthy aspect of her account is its emphasis on 'picturesque' details, songs expressing aspects of national history, religion, and culture. Texts, of course, were doubtless selected with propriety in mind, and it is interesting to speculate on the extent to which Indians had any responsibility for this, pre-selecting, as it were, repertoire suited to European sensibilities.

With inevitable but fundamental compromise, the process of making transcriptions could begin. There were several distinct stages. The first task was to transcribe the melody itself. The terminology Plowden used to describe this act is neutral, words such as 'write', 'note down', or 'take down'. The absence of any hint that the undertaking might be inherently problematic, or that there could be insurmountable technical difficulties, shows that for this collector at least—she, of course, was not making the arrangements herself—transcription sessions were completely routine events:

1787

30 December
At home. Bellas came out with permission of his Doctor and we employ'd the morning in writing out Hindostany songs.

1788

12 January
Had a Notch. Khennom here in the morning. Bellas wrote me down an Hindostanny tune.

[23] NLW, Aberystwyth, Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 30.

23 August
Bellas began to copy out my Hindostanny Songs in the New Books.

24 August
Bellas here . . . Wrote some Hindostanny songs for me.

1 September
Morning writing. Mr Braganza return'd again to write the Hindostanny tunes.

20 September
Did not see Bellas. Wrote out songs with the [?] all the morning . . . Mr Robinson told me Mr McCullock had not yet been able to procure Khanom to sing the [?] songs which I wanted.[24]

Once the melody was comprehended, perhaps in simplified form with its ornamentation removed, it was necessary to 'fit' it into a comprehensible European time signature, usually 2/4, 3/4, or 6/8. The next stage was to provide the melody with a bass-line, in place of the drone, which most Europeans could hear. It was at least recognized that the addition of a bass-line constituted a process of arrangement, and Plowden used the verb 'to set':

1788

9 March
Supt at Mr Grahams. The Ives family there . . . Mr Bird gave me two of my Hindostanny Songs set by himself.

19 August
Braganza began to set a Bass to all Col. Polier's Hindostanny tunes for me.

In reality, the professional musicians employed to make the transcriptions were well aware of the problematic nature of the undertaking, even if some of their patrons chose to overlook it. On the whole, Europeans could hear drones, appreciate the absence of 'harmony', and recognize melodic features, even modal inflections, but Indian systems of rhythm usually defeated them entirely. Bird wrote that it had cost him 'great pains' to bring the original melodies into a recognizable form, the music of Hindostan being deemed by him 'deficient' in regard to time.[25] It is instructive to compare Bird's remarks with those of Charles Edward Horn in the preface of his *Indian Melodies Arranged for the Voice and Piano Forte* (London, 1813). Horn began thus: 'I became early convinced, that the Music of Hindostan was of a value far beyond that which had been affixed to it by the report of Europeans in general.' He continued: 'the Airs are altogether so wild, and sometimes intricate, that it would be impossible, without extreme labour, and perseverance, to reduce them into time, or to reconcile the diversities of their meaning.' The problematic nature of the material which he had so fulsomely praised obviously required explanation. Like others, Horn had to assume that his sources were at fault: 'Many of the airs have been communicated to me in a form so irregular, and confused, (interspersed, indeed, with passages utterly foreign to the key) that I have suspected them to have been committed to paper by some unskilful hand, so as to have deviated from the native

[24] BL, OIOC, Plowden MS F127/94.
[25] W. H. Bird, *The Oriental Miscellany* (Calcutta, 1789; Edinburgh, 1805), preface.

Melody.' This must have been the case, Horn concluded with eurocentric superiority, because 'it is observable, that the human ear, in its least cultivated state, though addicted to wildness, and seldom in correct tune, is yet peculiarly offended by any dissonance, or inconsistency in the frame, and symmetry of the Air'. Horn thus recognized the problem in reconciling the demands of authenticity (the need to preserve the wildness) with those of European good taste (the need to control dissonance and irregularity of structure), but to have admitted that this was impossible would have been to undermine the whole undertaking.

The airs that emerged from the process of transcription to be performed in the fashionable Calcutta soirées of the late 1780s are bizarre indeed. Some commentators have discerned traces of Indian idioms in melodic contour, mode, rhythmic pattern, or styles of ornamentation. Yet, although ostensibly European in idiom, 'Hindostannie' airs, particularly in the early period of the 1780s, were far from fully acclimatized to their new culture. Crucially, the organic link between melody and harmony, essential in the late eighteenth-century classical idiom in which the realizations were done, is lacking. Thus, whether chord I or chord V is used at any given moment in the harmonization of an Indian tune seems completely arbitrary, not unlike random harmonizations determined by throwing dice. Not surprisingly, if they retained currency for any length of time, the airs became progressively more orthodox in style, to the point at which only the title, text, or accompanying illustration distinguished them from contemporary European salon pieces.

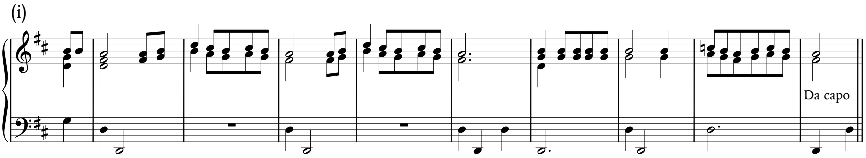
The most important sources of information about transcription practices are the surviving collections of airs. Comparisons between different transcriptions of the same air can be instructive, as in Ex. 3:

Ex. 3. Five versions of the tune 'Sakia'

(i)



(i)



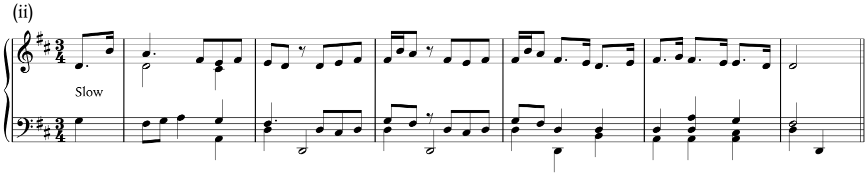
(i)



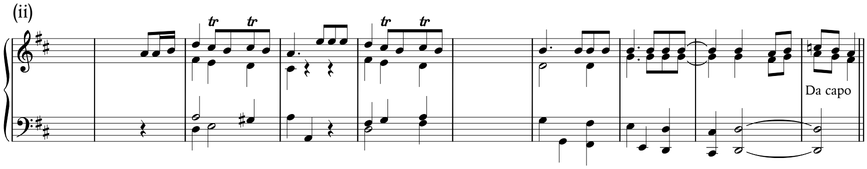
Source: W. Crotch, *Specimens of Various Styles* (London, 1808–15).
Title: 'Saki a faslah'. 'I have seen a M.S. of this tune in which it was said to be Persian'.
Pitch: at pitch.
Original: 'From a most valuable manuscript collection in the possession of Mrs Plowden'.
Date: collected *c.*1787–8.
Comment: Version (iv) from the Plowden manuscript (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam MS 380) is the source of the melody. Crotch himself probably harmonized the tune. He may have used ideas adapted from version (iii).

Ex. 3. Continued

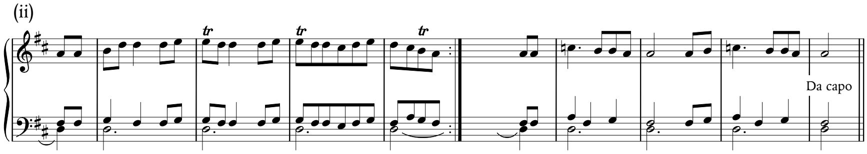
(ii)



(ii)



(ii)



Source: W. Crotch, *Specimens of Various Styles* (London, 1808–15).
Title: 'Rekhtah'.
Pitch: a fourth higher than given here.
Original: 'From a work called the Oriental Miscellany, or Airs of Hindostan, printed at Calcutta by William Hamilton Bird'.
Date: *The Oriental Miscellany* (Calcutta, 1789)—probably collected in 1787.
Comment: Bird is known to have been collecting songs in Lucknow in 1787. In his publication of 1789 he titled the song 'Sackia! fusul baharust' and identified the genre as a Rekhtah. The song is attributed to a Kashmerian singer 'Chanam'. Bird describes Rekhtahs as 'comprehensible' and as exceeding other types 'in form and regularity'. Bird's version is simpler than Crotch's.

Ex. 3. Continued

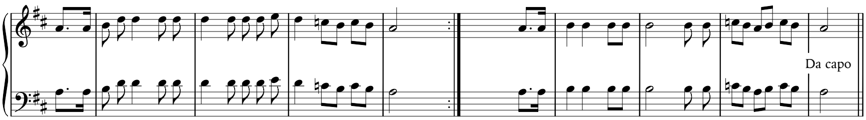


Source: W. Crotch, *Specimens of Various Styles* (London, 1808–15).
Title: Bengal Song. Sackia.
Pitch: A fourth higher than given here.
Original: [From] 'a manuscript collection of East Indian music . . . given me by the Hon. Miss Mercer Elphinstone'.
Date: unknown.
Comment: Miss Mercer Elphinstone was in India in the 1790s, and this transcription is thus probably later in date.

Ex. 3. Continued



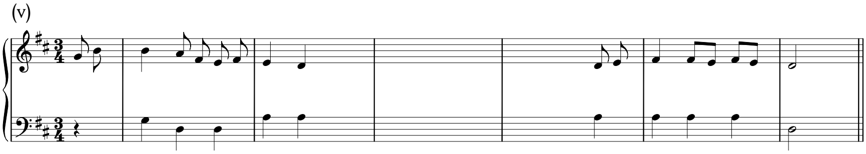
(iv)



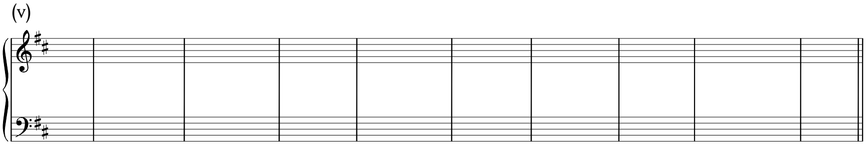
Source: Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Manuscript 380.
Title: none.
Pitch: at pitch.
Comment: the manuscript was compiled for Sophia Plowden *c.*1787–8 during her residence in Lucknow. This version formed the basis for version (i).

Ex. 3. Continued

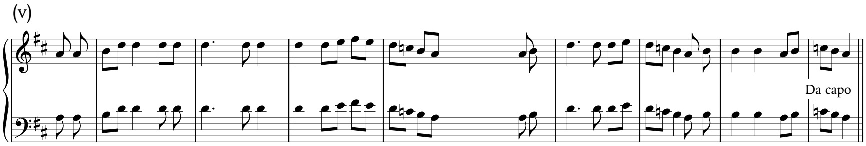
(v)



(v)



(v)



Source: Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Manuscript 380.
Title: none.
Pitch: at pitch.
Comment: an abbreviated version of the song.

The versions published by Crotch are all derived from earlier sources. The manuscript versions both come from the Plowden collection, to which Crotch obviously had access. Later versions by Williamson, Biggs, and Horn are even more remote from their Indian origins:

Thomas Williamson, *Twelve Original Hindoostanee Airs: Compiled and Harmonized by T. G. W.* (London, *c.*1800), No. 10, 'Sai Kee Haw' (piano piece).

Edward Biggs, *Twelve Hindoo Airs: with English Words Adapted to them by Mr Opie, and Harmonized for One, two or Three Voices* (London, n.d.), No. 1, Rekhtah, 'Sakia fuful beharust', Chanam (four voice glee with piano accompaniment, entitled 'Crazy Sally').

Charles Horn, *Indian Melodies: Arranged for Voice and Piano-Forte* (London, 1813) (solo song, including piano introductions).

Biggs, who was still crediting the song to 'Chanam', adds English words on a conventional popular theme: a woman driven mad by unrequited love: 'Hark what sound fills yonder valley, 'Tis the tone of Woe, Ha! that voice I know, Sure 'tis crazy Sally singing soft and slow.'

The five versions of 'Sakia' make an interesting case study in transcription. As perceived by Europeans, the form of the piece seems to be that of a simple rondo: ABACA, with A repeated after both B and C as indicated by the 'da capo' markings. There are significant differences between versions in section C. After the new material, version (i) repeats the second half of B, version (ii) elaborates its final cadence, but version (iii) repeats the whole of B, resulting in the overall form: ABACBA. Version (v), the second of the Fitzwilliam transcriptions, is a special case. It presents the song in a highly abbreviated form: ACA. It is likely that different Indian versions of the same tune would have been in circulation and indeed that a single Indian performer would have rendered the same piece differently on different occasions, and so the question arises as to whether this abbreviated version reflects an actual 'performance', a misperception on the part of the transcriber, or a subsequent omission. It should be remembered that performance for transcription took place in an English context. The singers were invited to the home for the specific purpose of transcription and might therefore have simplified their material (consciously or subconsciously) in order to achieve the common purpose.

Comparison between the five versions certainly demonstrates that the notated structure becomes less consistent after the first section, but this is precisely the point at which one performance might be expected to start diverging from another. Analysis of phrase lengths demonstrates this progressive divergence. Section A is identical in length in versions (i), (ii), (iii), and (iv): six bars of 3/4. Version (v) records what, on the balance of probability, seems the result of simple transcription oversight. It has the first twelve quavers and the last twelve quavers but not the middle twelve quavers. It is easy to envisage the transcriber notating the melody, phrase by phrase, and then later when making a fair copy, accidentally omitting the middle phrase. The unanimity rapidly fades in section B: the various versions have seven, eight, and nine bars, contracting or expanding different melodic elements.

Variant Indian performances, or inability on the part of the transcribers to perceive an opening ornamental flourish, probably account for the striking lack of agreement over the pitch of the first note of the melody (D, F sharp, or G) and the first note of the first complete bar (A or B).

Differences in the treatment of mode are evident. These too might conceivably have had their origin in Indian variants, but in this case it is perhaps more likely that the lack of agreement reflects European uncertainty with the unfamiliar tuning systems. Version (iv) records the melody as it was widely perceived by the English: in

Ex. 4. Examples of attempts to copy 'Indian' musical style in 'Hindostannie' airs (MS 380, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge)



the major key, but with a mixolydian close to B and C, leading back to the refrain. Versions (i) and (ii) retain the mixolydian elements, version (iii) removes them. These three versions also neatly encapsulate the range of harmonic choices: version (i) avoids any modulation to the dominant; version (iii) modulates to the dominant in the second section: version (ii) modulates to the dominant but retains the mixolydian close. The random nature of the process of harmonization is everywhere apparent: compare, for example, the two harmonizations of B in version (iii), or the variable position of chords I and V in the first three bars of A.

The musicians who transcribed versions (iv) and (v), seem to have understood that harmonization itself could be inimical to the spirit of the Indian originals. The realizations are much less 'polished' than those transmitted in later sources and there is frequent recourse to parallel octave writing, thereby obviating the need to make harmonic choices. The techniques used in an effort to remain faithful to what the transcriber heard included: (i) drones, sometimes utilizing a perfect fourth rather than

the more conventional perfect fifth; (ii) in one case, an unusual key signature, in an attempt to capture an unfamiliar mode; (iii) phrase structures which do not 'iron out' awkward 'left over' notes; (iv) vocal roulades (Ex. 4). Many Europeans could hear these characteristics in Indian music, the pervasive drone, the lack of modulation, the 'wild' character of the melodic ornamentation, but most took the view that such elements should be 'brought into' (the telling phrase sometimes used) an acceptable European idiom.

The Translation of Texts

The easy option in making Indian transcriptions was to arrange the melodies for pianoforte. Even when instrumental versions were made, the 'picturesque' elements of the original song texts might still be of considerable interest. It was important for Margaret Fowke to understand the sentiments of the various airs in her collection. If, however, the intention was to arrange the airs as songs for performance by a European singer, then the question of language would arise. Margaret had the good fortune to meet Sir William Jones, Calcutta's leading orientalist, who was making a journey up the Ganges to Benares. His current scholarly investigations into the origins of Indian music and his formidable range of linguistic skills ideally fitted him as a translator of song texts. Several letters passed between Margaret and Sir William and his wife on the subject of these translations:

Bangelpore, 6 January 1785 Lady Jones to Margaret Fowke

> A thousand thanks for the trouble you have taken about that and the musick which will be a great amusement to me, as translating the songs will be to Sir William, who says you ought to *command* and not to *beg* to have copies and as fast as he finishes them . . .[26]

A number of issues arose from the translations made by Sir William. Given the linguistic diversity of the subcontinent, it was often necessary, even for a man of his talents, to employ a 'moonshee' or interpreter. A double process of translation might then ensue. In this instance, the Indian linguist made the translation from Braj Bhasa, a dialect of Hindi spoken in the Matura area. Only then could Sir William translate from the Persian:

Maldah, 17 January 1785 Sir William Jones to Margaret Fowke

> I take the liberty to send you a double version of the three songs, the musick of which gave me so much pleasure at Sicrole; It was fortunate, that Mr. Harington's munshy understood the dialect of *Birj*, and turned the songs literally into Persian; from which I have translated them in European measures as well as in an irregular sort of metre, adapted syllable for syllable to the *Indian* tunes. If you should happen to receive more compositions of this sort from the holy land of *Matura*, I shall be much pleased with translating them in the same way; and by exchanging my brass for your gold, shall gain considerably by the traffick.[27]

[26] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E5, 63.
[27] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E5, 65.

Knowing of the interest of Warren Hastings in such matters, Margaret wrote to inform him of the part played by Sir William in her collection:

Benares, 25 January 1785 Margaret Fowke to Warren Hastings

> Mr Benn informed me of the pleasure you had expressed on receiving the airs, and if I tell you in how great a degree his account pleased me, you will think I have a double Lady's share of vanity.
>
> I must not forget to tell you that I received yesterday a most acceptable present from Sir William Jones—he has favored me with a practical translation of three Hindostanny Hooley songs, and obligingly promises me the remainder.[28]

In due course, Sir William was presented with musical copies of the songs for which he had provided translations:

Calcutta, 27 February 1785 Sir William Jones to Margaret Fowke

> Dear Madam, I have this instant received your very obliging letter and acceptable present of Hindustanny Songs, which I will not fail to translate and transmit to Benares in the course of next vacation.[29]

The co-operation between Margaret Fowke and Sir William Jones is a clear example of the fruitful interplay between the fashionable interests of women in Indian song tunes for performance, and the scientific interests of men in the theory and history of Indian music. Sir William acted as the focal point for a small group of men, who shared his interests. Charles Wilkins, he believed, was ideally suited to the task of investigating Indian music. In a letter dated 22 June 1784, he wrote: 'First I expect from you an *Hindú Pantheon* and next a complete tract on Hindú Musick: no man has better materials than yourself for those works; none have made more original observations on the subject; few have more discernment or taste.'[30] Sir Robert Chambers, a fellow judge and Margaret Fowke's companion on her journey up the Ganges, displayed some interest. Sir William asked Charles Wilkins to adjudicate upon a disagreement between an Indian 'Pundit' and Sir Robert, over the exact meaning of an Indian musical term.[31] The co-operation between the scholarly and the fashionable in the study of Indian culture is typical of the age of Warren Hastings, as it drew to its close in the early 1780s.

The Performance of 'Hindostannie' Airs

The principal European performer of 'Hindostannie' airs during the 1780s was Sophia Plowden. Her husband was an employee of the East India Company, whose duties necessitated periodic moves between Calcutta and the inland residencies at Lucknow and Benares. As a collector, she was very active indeed, but during the periods when she was in Calcutta, she had to rely upon friends to keep her supplied

[28] BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/25, 2.

[29] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E5, 72.

[30] *The Letters of Sir William Jones*, ed. G. Cannon, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), ii. 652.

[31] Ibid. ii. 646–7.

with new songs. Margaret Fowke wrote to her brother to ask him to send her some, as Indian airs were proving very popular with Calcutta audiences:

Calcutta, 5 August 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> I wish that you would occasionally take down the Hindostannie airs you hear at Benares. It is an opportunity which will never return. When you have collected about five or 6, I wish you would yourself enclose them to Mrs Plowden—the compliment will be very flattering and the songs highly acceptable. She sings her little collection very frequently and always with applause.[32]

The following year, still keen to perform Indian songs but lacking the stimulation of new material, Sophia wrote directly to Margaret, who was now resident in Benares. In this letter she clearly implies that it was her usual practice to perform songs in the Persian language, for which she required the assistance of an interpreter:

Calcutta, 30 August 1784 Sophia Plowden to Margaret Fowke

> How could you be so severe upon the subject of Persian? I never knew much more than the Character, and that I have now nearly forgotten having lost my Moonshy soon after you left me—I have however still the wish to acquire that language remaining, and if ever I get another instrument I will do my utmost to perform my promise with your brother. Benares would be a fine place for study of this kind. I dare say by this time you can read and translate. You send me no addition to my collection of Persian songs—I am tired of all the old ones and s^{d} never sing them at all if they did not help to remind me of y^{r} delightful little concerts (which Mr P. who is as great an admirer as my self of y^{r} musical powers often talks of)—we have heard nothing like it since you left us nor shall we 'till you return again.[33]

In due course, her friend supplied her with some new tunes, and she was delighted and amazed:

Calcutta, n.d. [? March 1785] Sophia Plowden to Margaret Fowke

> Ten thousand thanks for the Indostani Airs—they are most of them known to me having heard Johnstones Set sing them frequently; but how you could note them down so correctly I cannot conceive. Mr Fowke promised to send me down the words of each song written in the Persian character—pray remind him of this, for I cannot be sure of learning them right unless I catch the sound from a Moonsheer reading them to me. Have you ever met with an Indostani Song the Chorus of which is 'Tazzy bat Tazzy No bat No'? It is a very common one but if you could get the words and music for me I shall be much indebted—all the Notch Girls know it—I have a few airs to send you but I must wait for Mr Bellas to write them as they want a little help that Stone cannot give them.[34]

Several interesting points emerge from this letter. First, the existence of a repertoire of songs, known through frequent performance by Indian nautch groups, is confirmed. Also of interest is the detailed explanation of how Plowden coped with the Persian language. She required the texts to be written down in Persian script, a language with which Francis Fowke, like many East India Company officials, evidently

[32] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E4, 235. [33] Fowke MS E5, 44. [34] Fowke MS E5, 76.

had some familiarity, so that her Indian 'moonshee' could then read them back to her, and coach her on the pronunciation. Finally, she implies that a certain level of specialization had developed among European musicians with regard to the skills needed to make transcriptions. Stone, a recently arrived music retailer, did not yet possess the necessary expertise. With a new stock of songs, she resumed performing airs at concert parties, sometimes in Indian dress:

Calcutta, 29 March 1785 Francis Fowke to Margaret Fowke

> Mr Bellows goes with them [a party leaving for Benares]. By the by he plays on the violoncello. It seems he is a brother Doctor of music and has put some new basses to the Hindostanny airs . . . I gave him an invitation thro' Plowden. I hear him mentioned as a very genteel young man. He is a cadet. I went last night to Bristows. I found Madame and Miss Juliana Williams in Hindostanny dresses.[35]

The following day he reported that Sophia Plowden had 'sung a great number of Hindostanny tunes'.[36]

The lengths to which Plowden was prepared to go in pursuit of authenticity becomes apparent in an earlier letter to her sister about a masquerade which took place in Calcutta in 1783. At this entertainment, a group of English musical amateurs presented themselves to the public as a nautch group:

Calcutta, 6 April 1783 Sophia Plowden to her sister Lucy

> I had long had it in idea that a set of Cashmerian singers would make an excellent Groupe at a Masquerade. It had never been attempted and therefore had the recommendation of *novelty*. I was lucky enough to have a sufficient number of my Lucknow acquaintance in Calcutta to assist in forming a Groupe and to make a band of Musicians. Mr Taylor was the head of the band. He is very musical and easily learnt to play on the Sirindah or fiddle of this Country all my Persian and Indostani songs. A Mr Turvey [?] play'd the Sittar, another of this Country['s] instruments, something like the guitar but inferior to it, and young Playdell play'd the Tabella [Tobella?] or Tam Tam, which is something like a tambourine or small drum, which 'tis the Etiquette to play with a wonderful deal of grimace, twisting the face in to all kinds of forms, keeping the head shaking and inclining on one side and, at every turn of the tune which is supposed to be more harmonious than another, to cry out in extasy Waw! Waw!. In short, my d^{r} Lucy, you would with all y^{r} powers of mimicry be an excellent hand on the Tabella. Mr Shaw was my Hooka badar [hookah burdar] and carried a most elegant small gold Hookah that Col. C. presented me with before he left India. As the singing and dancing Ladies who are in any high stile always smoke and chew Beetle [betel] or Pawn [pan] with this we were also amply provided. As I could not attempt to teach any one the Songs in the time I had allow'd me to get ready, I gave that point up and only look'd out for such as would have a good *appearance* in the Characters I design'd. For my companion I got a boy who had dark hair and eyes and look'd a Cashmerian, and for the *Mother* of the set a Mr Graham who is perfect Master of the Persian and Indostan language and was dress'd admirably. He knew the stile he s^{d} appear in having been much up the Country. My band were all dress'd in Musselman's dresses. As mine was a very elegant dress, I

[35] Fowke MS E7, 22. [36] Fowke MS E7, 23.

> shall give you a description of it. [A lengthy description ensues] . . . which gives me a compleat Indostani appearance. The songs I sang were very pretty ones, and the Groupe were so admirably dress'd that many people insisted on our being really Indostanis. I rec^d an infinite number of fine compliments on my appearance, and after wearing my Mask about 2 hours was glad to take it off and speak in my own language.
>
> I appeared in no other Character during the Evening—indeed it was sufficient trouble to be compleat in this. My dress was made at Lucknow and I wore it first at Middleton's Masquerade where I went as a Persian Girl and Col. Comac was my beau, so he can given you a perfect idea of it.[37]

Although organized for a Calcutta society masquerade, Plowden was clearly looking to Lucknow practices to provide the necessary authenticity. Her picture of male East India Company employees donning Indian costume and attempting to render Indian tunes on the original instruments is a remarkable one. An analogy might be seen in the adoption of 'peasant' instruments such as the hurdy-gurdy in the Versailles court. Certainly, matters of authenticity in dress, behaviour, performance style, and accessories (such as the hookah) were treated with the utmost seriousness, and yet the intention was merely to present a good *appearance*. Provided that the show was convincing and the characters realistic, faithfulness to the music of the Indian original was probably of minimal significance.

To attempt to replicate an Indian ensemble for the purposes of a masquerade was one thing; to attempt to incorporate Indian instruments in a European band was quite another. The well-established taste for exoticism in instrumental music, most notably in the 'Turkish' instruments and musical effects popular in Viennese music, at least provided a precedent. It is only possible to guess at the extraordinary sounds that might have been heard on 5 November 1795, when Mr Lebedeff (a cellist) presented his new play *The Disguise*: 'To commence with Vocal and Instrumental Music, called The Indian Serenade. To these Musical Instruments which are held in esteem by the Bengallees, will be added European. The words of the much admired Poet Shree Bharod Chondra Ray are set to Music.' There was even one such 'mixed' performance in London, when a concert featuring Indian music with Indian instruments was accompanied by a 'full Band'.[38]

Reception

The impact which 'Hindostannie' airs had in Anglo-Indian society in the 1780s was considerable, and it was felt at the highest levels. Warren Hastings, whose sympathetic approach to Indian culture was well known, expressed great interest. During his visit to the kingdom of Oudh in 1784, he met Margaret Fowke and was captivated by her performances of Indian airs. She presented him with a copy of her collection, which he acknowledged in characteristically elegant fashion, praising the

[37] BL, OIOC, Plowden MS B187.

[38] S. McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 115.

authenticity of the pieces and even hinting at the beneficial political effects of musical contacts between Indians and Europeans:

Calcutta, 9 January 1785 Warren Hastings to Margaret Fowke

Dear Madam,

If I had replied to your letter at the Time that I received it, or even much later, I must have contented myself with a bare acknowledgement of it, and with a common expression of thanks for the book of Hindostanny Airs which accompanied it . . . If Mr Benn had done me Justice, he will have told you that I accepted your most elegant Present with such excited Symptoms of Pleasure and Admiration as were, at the Time at least, the best Thanks that I could offer in Return. Indeed it is *most* elegant, but not more so than yr letter which accompanied it. I heartily thank you for both.

You know (or more probably have forgot it) that I have always protested against every Interpolation of European Taste in the Recital of the Music of Hindostan. I have now a confirmed Objection to it from the Demonstration before me that your Airs will never be accompanied again with such *Graces* as they have already received in a different sense of the Word.

I have had the Pleasure to hear them all played by a very able performer, and can attest that they are genuine Transcripts of the original music, of which I have a perfect Remembrance. I could easily discriminate the Notes from the Execution, which only wanted the spirit and originality which they possessed under your Hands. I do not much regret that I was not your Pupil. I should have discredited your Tuition. I am satisfied that I am not absolutely unqualified to judge the Merits of others, though possessing none of my own, and with that Virtue you sh^{d} be satisfied in every one who has the Honor to approach you. But though not your Pupil I hope to be again your humble Hearer, though perhaps at a distant period of Time and in a distant Land. Till that time I shall ever bear in Remembrance the many Evenings which were pleasingly and no less rationally spent in your Society and in your Brother's at Sekrow. For one of these I feel something like an obligation in my public Character, in the Hope that you will have contributed by it to convey to the people of Hindostan an Opinion that our Meetings of Festivity were always conducted with the same Taste and Decorum as that in which you condescended to gratify the Prince's Curiosity by shewing him what they were at Benares.

Warren Hastings[39]

News of the presentation to the governor-general spread quickly, and there was an immediate demand for copies of the manuscript. Significantly, the requests were nearly all made by, or on behalf of women, and some came from leading officials, such as Stables, a member of the Council, who wanted the tunes for his 'musical' girls.[40] Reports of Margaret Fowke's collection even came to the attention of her influential godmother in London. Joseph Fowke, well aware of the value of this connection, urged his daughter to send Lady Clive a copy of her collection:

Calcutta, 1 January 1785 Joseph Fowke to Margaret Fowke

Mr Perry tells me Lady Clive is very desirous of procuring the Indostaunee Airs, and in particular one call'd Tominee Kaukee. I think it wou'd be an acceptable Present if you

[39] BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/25, 1.

[40] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E7, 37.

wou'd send to her by the latter ships a Copy of the Book you presented to the Gov. some copies of which are already scattered through the place.[41]

An indication of the extent to which 'Hindostannie' tunes were becoming well known in the Anglo-Indian community is that even in London, Margaret Clive was sufficiently well informed about which were the favourites of the moment, to request a specific piece. Joseph was keen that his daughter should send the melody requested, and that she should enclose other tunes, translations, and background information.[42] When he finally wrote to Lady Clive, he excused the absence of the requested song by pointing out that it was better known on the coast than inland, where Margaret was stationed:

Calcutta, 28 July 1785 Joseph Fowke to Margaret Clive

Madam,

By accident I learned from Mr Perry that your Ladyship was desirous of obtaining some Indostaun Airs, in consequence of which I take the liberty of sending the enclosed which I received from my daughter, and which I am sure wou'd have come directly to you, had she known your wants. As she is a perfect Mistress of Music, and incomparably the finest player upon the Harpsichord I have ever heard, I think I may depend upon her having taken an accurate Copy by her Ear. Marcella, if living, might perhaps enter into the spirit of them; I know no other person equally capable. *Toomany Kawkee* is more commonly sung upon the Coast; my daughter has never heard it, or you may be assured it woud have appeared in the Collection. I hereto subjoin a Copy of her Letter to me on the Subject of these Airs which perhaps may afford you some amusement. Your Ladyship will observe that almost every word in the Birgi language terminates in a vowel, and as Horace reproaches his Countrymen with being infected with the Asiatick Music I am tempted to conjecture that the latin terminations were changed into Vowels at the same time. I am with great esteem and regard, Madam, Your very obedient Servant

Joseph Fowke.

Copy of my Daughter's letter to me dated 11 January 1785. [see above]

Since transcribing the foregoing I have seen S^r^ W^m^ Jones who promises me the translation alluded to in my Daughter's letter, and if I get it in time I will send it enclosed. I am likewise informed that Mr Hastings sings the Hindostannie Airs perfectly well, but as I never inclined to listen to his voice, which I shou'd judge to be a hollow one, I never laid myself out to hear him. I wish however Marella coud hear him, who wou'd at once make himself a Master of the Style, and improve the Subject of the Airs. If his Fancy was struck he wou'd produce something very original on the Hindostannie foundation.[43]

The strongest proof of the genuineness of the interest that Warren Hastings had in Hindostannie airs comes in this passing comment. That he should employ Indian musicians could be regarded as a political gesture; that he should receive copies of sets of airs went with the office; but that, as governor-general, he should sing them, and, still more, let it be known that he liked to sing them, was certainly to make a

[41] Fowke MS E5, 59. [42] Fowke MS E5, 67, 75.

[43] NLW, Aberystwyth, Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 30.

significant statement of support for Indian musical culture. It is hard to imagine any subsequent holder of the office doing the same.

The formal recognition of the 'Hindostannie' air as a genre came in 1789, when William Hamilton Bird published his *Oriental Miscellany*, a collection of airs arranged for pianoforte. He wrote to London, to seek the approval of Warren Hastings, expressing the hope that the former governor-general (who had other things on his mind) would 'deign to receive the copies of oriental music of my compiling'.[44] The list of subscribers did indeed include Hastings (two copies) and his successor Cornwallis (one copy). A number of male amateur musicians, who several years earlier had played with members of the Fowke family, were subscribers, notably J. Auriol, J. Playdell, and Captain Kydd. One professional musician, Mr Oehme, is on the list. Some 15 per cent of the subscribers were women, naturally including Sophia Plowden and other well-known Anglo-Indian amateur musicians, such as Mrs Ives, Mrs Evans, and Mrs Bristow. Although it was the convention for men to publish, it is rather surprising that nowhere in his introduction does Bird even mention the names of his fellow collectors, Fowke or Plowden. This is a classic example of how easy it was for a valuable contribution made by women to cultural life in the eighteenth century to disappear from the historical record, merely because of the convention that men undertook the 'public' activity of publishing. The contribution made by women, for whom most of the manuscript collections were compiled, emerges with greatest clarity in a later publication by William Crotch, precisely because this author treats his sources with a degree of fairness.[45] Introducing his selection of East Indian music, he credits one item as having been 'brought over by Lady Clive', another as being 'from a manuscript collection lent me by Lady Metcalf', another from 'a manuscript collection of East Indian music . . . given me by the Hon. Miss Mercer Elphinstone'. No fewer than fourteen items come from 'a most valuable manuscript collection in the possession of Mrs Plowden'. Crotch writes that this collection 'will, I am happy to say, at some future period, be published'. It never was. Hardly any trace remains of Margaret Fowke's efforts in published sources. In his *Lyric Airs* Edward Jones credits two of his Persian airs to her brother Francis who had 'learnt them in the East Indies'.[46]

The critical reception of 'Hindostannie' airs focused on several elements of the genre. Margaret Fowke, clearly deriving her values from the original poetry, perceived a range of sentimental emotions, tenderness, delicacy, passion, and others such as wildness. A common talking point was how they compared to other 'national' airs:

Calcutta, 5 August 1783 Margaret Fowke to Francis Fowke

> Two of these airs I think tender and delicate in a very high degree. Scawen who is not a musical man observed they were like the Venetian ballads, and I think that you and I were formerly struck with this resemblance of style.[47]

[44] BL, Add. MS 29171, 363. [45] W. Crotch, *Specimens of Various Styles of Music* (London, *c.*1808–15), 13.
[46] E. Jones, *Lyric Airs: Consisting of Specimens of Greek, Albanian, Walachian, Turkish, Arabian, Persian, Chinese, and Moorish National Songs and Melodies* (London, 1804), 25. [47] Fowke MS E4, 235.

Discussion also focused on the question of authenticity, which remained an important goal, and a touchstone of the transcriber's success. In its heyday, the 'Hindostannie' air obviously acquired authenticity in its own right in the Anglo-Indian community, with the emergence of popular favourites and leading performers. Yet the claim of authenticity went much further by explicitly including faithfulness in some usually unspecified sense to the Indian originals. Warren Hastings believed Margaret Fowke's airs to be 'genuine transcripts of the original music' of which he claimed 'a perfect remembrance'. She in return credited him with a 'critically exact' appreciation of the genre. These claims were probably sustained largely on the basis of some element of melodic recognizability. For the claim of authenticity to have been credible, 'Sakia', as sung by Sophia Plowden at her musical soirées in Calcutta, must, however distantly, have been recognizable as the melody sung by Khanam during her frequent visits to the English community in Lucknow. Authenticity was also to be seen in performance style. The few simple tunes learnt by Sophia Plowden's masquerade group were deemed by the participants a great success. The intention, however, was merely to 'take off' the Indian musicians, and the description refers openly to 'the powers of mimicry' displayed. Presentation was all important, with particular attention paid to details of dress and accessories. Mimicry can be used to belittle, to express contempt, but it can also express a sense of the value and even the importance of what is being parodied. At the height of the fashion for the 'Hindostannie' air, a certain sense of respect does seem to inform such activities as this masquerade.

The striving for authenticity was inherently problematic. The tension between the desire to remain faithful to the Indian originals and the need to present something that was acceptable as being in good taste in European terms threw up musical dilemmas that were impossible to resolve. Thus, the early Fitzwilliam transcriptions, interesting as evidence of how Anglo-Indians regarded Indian music, are musically unsuccessful in European terms. The later versions became more coherent as pieces of European music, but in doing so progressively lost touch with the Indian originals. In the end, the favoured solution was to present Indian tunes as a kind of paradox. 'Wild, but pleasing when understood' was Bird's view; 'wild', that is, un-European, untamed, disordered, if natural, yet 'pleasing', that is capable of giving pleasure. The crucial words are 'when understood'. In order to appeal to the European ear, Indian music required interpretation. Like all other 'national' airs, 'Hindostannie' tunes retained with some pride their cultural and geographical origins in their titles, but, after thorough arrangement, little remained in their musical character to distinguish them from 'Irish' or 'Scottish' airs.

The Study of Indian Instruments

The fashion for collecting sets of Indian miniatures of instruments and transcriptions of 'Hindostannie' airs found a 'male' counterpart in the scientific study of Indian instruments. The growing interest in the study of ethnic musicians and

instruments was being felt even in London. Omai, a Tahitan chieftain who travelled to England, was the object of intense society interest, while Burney examined a set of Chinese instruments. For Anglo-Indians resident in the subcontinent, specimens were readily to hand. With the known enthusiasm of Warren Hastings for Indian musical culture there were several attempts to evaluate critically the performance techniques and structural characteristics of Indian instruments. In the voluminous correspondence of Warren Hastings there is a report in the form of a signed affidavit of experiments conducted by George Bogle to ascertain whether the circular breathing, observed in the performance of a wind player from Bhutan, was really what it seemed:

Rungpore, 27 February 1780 George Bogle

> We do hereby certify that we were present, and saw Tamchen, a Baoteea, play upon a Baotan Pipe, made of a Reed, in the manner of a German Flute, (though with only six Holes) and that he continued to sound it for the space of five minutes by a watch, with a continual, uninterrupted Sound; drawing Breath through his nose at the same time that he filled and blew through the flute with his mouth, so that no break or Interval could be perceived in the sound. That we might not be deceived, we held a feather under his Nose, and saw it attracted towards it each time he drew breath through his Nostrils. He applied his mouth to the upper Hole of the Flute, in the same manner as Europeans do, and played a Baotan Tune, with all the Variety of high and low notes, without the least Interruption of Sound.
>
> We gave him a French Horn, an instrument which he had never seen before, and he continued, in the same manner, to fill and blow it during the Space of near three Minutes; though in only one Note, and the Sound being sometimes louder than at others.
>
> He informed us that the manner in which the people of his country acquire their Art, is by blowing through a Pipe immersed in Water. He brought a small Pipe; and having put one End of it in a Bowl of Water to the Depth of about an Inch, continued, for three Minutes, to blow through the Pipe, during which time the water was incessantly agitated and raised to a considerable height above the surface; and we distinctly heard him, at the same time, draw Air through his Nose, and saw his Breast heave as in the Act of Respiration. He informed us that he could easily, continue thus, for Hours, to take in Breath through his Nose, while he blew it out through his Mouth.[48]

The eurocentric conduct of this experiment was typical. Suspecting a trick, Bogle deemed it necessary for the musician to demonstrate his method of breathing on a French horn; only then could deception be ruled out.

Francis Fowke decided to publish an evaluation of an Indian instrument in the proceedings of the newly formed Asiatic Society of Bengal. Although the fieldwork was done in 1785–6, there was a long delay in its publication:

Crishn-nagar, 4 August 1787 Sir William Jones to Francis Fowke

> The Company's press is so employed by the Government that we go on slowly with the Transactions of the Society; but, though slowly, yet we do go on and hope to publish two volumes together. Your drawing of the Vína and the player on it shall be engraved by the best artist here.[49]

[48] BL, Add. MS 29233, 106.

[49] BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/31, 2.

In his account, Francis Fowke sought to reassure his readers about the accuracy of his measurements of intervals:

> It has all been done by measurements: and with regard to the intervals I would not depend upon my ear, but had the *Been* tuned to the harpsichord, and compared the instruments carefully note by note more than once.[50]

By this method, the sequence of intervals on the open strings was recorded as: a′ a d A e c♯ A. Fowke was obviously unable to record intonation in any other way than by using his harpsichord, yet in asking the Indian performer to tune to it, any possibility of listening out for finer gradations of tuning was lost at a stroke. At least the player was present. Back in London, Burney hoped to be able to find out the 'Scales' of a number of Chinese instruments taken back to England.[51] Determining the notes playable on an unfamiliar instrument was felt to be an important first step in understanding.

Fowke next described the frets, 'fixed on by wax by performer by ear'. His informant for this observation was 'Pear Cawn', brother of Jeewan Shah, who was ill at this time. The playing position is described, with the upper gourd held over the left shoulder, and the lower on the right knee. Brief details of fingering are given. Thus far, Fowke's account might be described as a formal example of a common genre in English travel literature: the description of an unfamiliar musical instrument, largely in terms of its technical construction and playing techniques. His attempt to convey a sense of the musical style of the instrument is of altogether greater interest:

> The style of music on this instrument is in general that of great execution. I could hardly ever discover any regular air or subject. The music seems to consist of a number of detached passages, some very regular in their ascent and descent, and those that are played softly are most of them both uncommon and pleasing.

What Fowke could most easily perceive was virtuosity ('great execution'). He attempted, as would have been natural for any European, to identify distinct themes ('regular airs'), from which it might have been possible to attempt to describe some formal characteristics. Failing this, he could hear some regularity in scalic ascents and descents, perhaps played staccato ('detached'). Almost certainly, Fowke had discussed the subject of Indian harmony with his sister and father. Joseph Fowke had written to his daughter to ask her views on this subject:

Calcutta, 15 November 1784 Joseph Fowke to Margaret Fowke

> I long very much to see your Indostaunee Airs which by the way I take to be Persian of which I think very favourably considering them as an effeminate species of Music. I do not expect to find anything of the sublime in their compositions. I wish you cou'd take off the notes of the Dole, and all the accompaniments, with the parts allotted to every singer and every performer, and tell me if they have any such thing as harmony in their Compositions.[52]

[50] F. Fowke, 'On the Vina or Indian Lyre', *Asiatick Researches*, 1 (1788), 295–9.

[51] *The Letters of Charles Burney*, vol. i: *(1751–1784)*, ed. A. Ribeiro (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 235.

[52] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E5, 53.

In reply, Margaret had pointed out that a drone ('uninterrupted buzz') was used. Many European auditors could hear this much. One hundred and fifty years earlier, the Cornish sea captain Peter Mundy had listened to a dancing group at Agra, and noted: 'It is to be understood they all singe, aswell those that daunce as those that playe, all of one note, except the man who is the Diapason. Noe thirds nor fifts in Musick as I could heere.'[53] Francis Fowke thus knew that he would be expected to comment on the drone, but he nevertheless struggled to comprehend it:

> The open wires are struck from time to time in a manner that, I think, prepares the ear for a change of modulation to which the uncomfortably full and fine tones of these notes greatly contribute; but the ear I think is always disappointed; and if, there is ever any transition from the principal key, I am inclined to think it is very short.

The preconceived notion, that he ought to be looking for harmonic progression, the movement of the drone 'tonic' to another key area, prevented any assessment of the drone on its own terms.

Sir William Jones, whose area of investigation was not that of contemporary Indian music, did on one occasion conduct fieldwork of the kind reported by Francis Fowke. Through his theoretical enquiries, he had discovered that Indian music made use of units smaller than semitones. He asked Charles Wilkins for advice: 'I find also, that the Indians have not only semitones, but even an *enharmonick* kind, or thirds and quarters of Notes. Any hint on this subject will be particularly acceptable to me.'[54] He tried to ascertain the practical differences between Indian and European scales in an experiment:

> I tried in vain to discover any difference in the practice between the Indian scale, and that of our own; but knowing my ear to be very insufficiently exercised, I requested a German professor of music to accompany with his violin a Hindu lutanist, who sung by note some popular airs on the loves of CRISHNA and RHADA; he assured me that the scales were the same; and Mr Shore afterwards informed me, that, when the voice of a native singer was in tune with the harpsichord he found the Hindu series of seven notes to ascend, like ours by a sharp third.

Even though a violin was used (allowing the possibility of the discovery of microtones), the experiment did not work. As for Shore's information, if an Indian singer was 'in tune' with the harpsichord, not surprisingly, he was found to be singing a European scale! It has been suggested that the 'Hindu lutanist' was Jiwan Shah, who is mentioned by Francis Fowke in his paper.[55] In a letter to Earl Spencer, Jones mentions, in the context of the decline of Indian music from its golden age of two thousand years ago, that he had nonetheless 'heard with pleasure a player on the *vinà*'.[56] Another possibility is 'Pear Cawn'. The popular airs were surely the 'Hindostannie' airs transcribed by Margaret Fowke and sent to Sir William Jones. The identity of the German professor is uncertain, but musicians with the name of Oehme and Diehle are recorded in Calcutta at this time.

[53] I. Woodfield, *English Musicians in the Age of Exploration* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1995), 278.

[54] *The Letters of Sir William Jones*, ii. 646–7.

[55] G. Farrell, *Indian Music and the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 26.

[56] *The Letters of Sir William Jones*, ii. 756.

6

The Return to England

Anglo-Indians on the Grand Tour

Notwithstanding the practical obstacles to keyboard-playing in India, Margaret Fowke stuck to her objective of becoming a 'finished' pianist. The true level of her accomplishment by the time of her return to England is difficult to assess. Her reputation in Calcutta was certainly good, but standards of performance in India generally were low. Her family's assessments are of course inadmissible as evidence of any actual level of attainment, but they are revealing of attitudes towards the musicianship of a young woman. Joseph's appraisal of his daughter's progress by the time that she was about to return to England was at least straightforward:

Calcutta, 28 February 1786 Joseph Fowke to Lady Brudenel

> She has some taste of the fine arts, and of music in particular, in which I esteem her a perfect mistress upon the harpsichord. I have never heard her equal among the foremost professors, either in the delicacy of her touch, or the variety of her sentiments. She has the finger to execute the most rapid movements; but her good sense restrains the progress of it, that she may not outrun the conceptions of her auditors.[1]

This was the fond father speaking—praise without reserve. He clearly saw his daughter in the image of his own ideas. The self-discipline demonstrated by Margaret Fowke in her struggle with failing instruments and low-grade teaching in Calcutta was admirable, but the circumstance of her having spent the formative decade of her keyboard education in India left her inadequately trained in one important respect: contact with modern, stylish, Italianate taste. She would not be a 'finished' musician until she had acquired this.

By the late eighteenth century, the Grand Tour, traditionally part of the education of the English aristocracy, was developing a wider appeal. Much larger numbers of women, indeed whole families, were now making the pilgrimage to Italy, and the

[1] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E6B, 109.

phenomenon of the Grand Tour was rapidly assuming the character of mass cultural tourism. For Anglo-Indians returning from long periods in the East, an Italian sojourn had a very particular function. Although they came from an inherently interesting background, having spent time in a country variously portrayed as exotic and sensuous, or as barbaric, uncivilized, and dangerous, a less flattering perspective on their previous place of residence stressed its provincialism or even its parochialism, at least as measured by European fashion. Once back in Europe, to refuse to spend wealth acquired in India on music or other cultural activities could easily be portrayed as philistinism of the rankest kind. Susan Burney was absolutely scandalized by a comment reportedly made by her Anglo-Indian brother-in-law, Clement Francis. His response to a proposal that he might wish to accompany the sisters to a benefit concert for the violinist Madame Gautherot was that '*he had not slaved so many years in India to pay half a guinea for any evening's entertainment—She might go if she pleased—but he neither w^d^ to that Consort or any other*'.[2] It was precisely in order to combat the potentially damaging stereotype of the uncultured 'nabob', as well as to remedy the more generally accepted deficiency in Italian style, that Anglo-Indians took the Grand Tour with such ostentation. Clive is a typically extravagant example, travelling to Italy with a large entourage, paying grossly inflated prices for modest works of art. On a less flamboyant level, Margaret Fowke met several acquaintances from her India days during her year abroad. A period of immersion in Italian culture was an effective means of acquiring a fashionable gloss on her achievements to date.

The use of the Grand Tour as the 'finishing' stage for a young woman pianist is an aspect of the phenomenon that has been little studied. For Margaret Fowke, her year abroad was to be no mere sight-seeing trip, to admire at leisure the antiquities and art of Italy or to experience the delights of opera in the great theatres of Paris, Rome, and Naples. It was to incorporate a strict regime of extraordinarily concentrated practice, and the elegant society soirées of Rome and Naples were to provide the prestigious setting for a display of her talent. In the following diary, extracted chiefly from the letters she wrote home to her brother, a wide range of matters pertaining to her piano-playing are covered: the provision of pianofortes; the regime of practice; the hiring of fashionable teachers; the attempt to conquer the elusive skills of extemporization; and the fashionable concert parties in Italy, where, finally, she made her début as a fully 'finished' player:[3]

Harwich, 12 May 1788 Margaret Benn to Francis Fowke

> I found to my great concern that the waggon does not leave London till Thursday next, so that it will be a week before I shall receive my Piano-forte. Williams indeed has just started an idea that gives me a chance of getting it in three days, which is to lay it across the Phaeton.

[2] BL, Egerton MS 3692, 25^{v}.

[3] The extracts are from the following: BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E8 and Ormathwaite MSS D546/26 and D546/31.

17 May Margaret Benn to Francis Fowke

It occurred to Cornelius after we left town that he might get the Piano-forte conveyed on the top of the Harwich stage. He actually succeeded and in consequence of this bright thought [I] was in possession of my music the next day. I have practised a great deal since I have been here. I have been employed upon some pieces in Stirkel's old set which are extremely pretty and which I have very seldom heard, and with the last in Haydn's 40th set which you know contains one of our favourite airs. Pray have you taken the Violin? It will be a great pity not to make use of the full tide that was rushing in just as you left London—an hour's practice at such a time has more effect than a week's at any other.

Margaret Benn to Francis Fowke

Pray inform me if you can easily hire a Piano-forte or harpsichord in Paris and at the Provincial towns?

27 May Francis Fowke to Margaret Benn

I have too great a regard for the bones of my violin to expose it to the rude shocks of a French chaise; but I have hired one here as I could do Harp, Harpsichord or any other instrument. For provincial towns I cannot answer.

Brussels, 19 July Margaret Benn to Francis Fowke

I have hired a Piano-forte, for tho' I do not suppose I shall find much time to practise during the few days I shall be here, yet I think even a little is of consequence, and in the midst of all my hurry I believe I have already played about a couple of hours.

Dusseldorf, 2 August Margaret Benn to Francis Fowke

I have hired an instrument here which is the reason that I have not written more to you, as my opportunities of practising occur now so seldom. We set off for Cologne after dinner and I intend to play about a couple of hours before I go. I have played three or four hours every day since I have been here.

Strasbourg, 19 August John Benn to Francis Fowke

Peggy is in good health and spirits, and is at this moment in high blow tho' it is past twelve o'clock. We have hired a Piano Forte for our stay here, on which she practises four hours a day.

23 August Margaret Benn to Francis Fowke

My letter would have been sent away before but I have been uninterruptedly engaged with my Piano-forte. Benn told you I practised four hours a day, but I can assure you I do nothing else the whole day thro'. I am mostly engaged with Haydn's music.

Zurich, n.d. Margaret Benn to Francis Fowke

There is so little to be seen in this country except the beauties of nature that I willingly spent my mornings at home, and you will be pleased to hear that I devoted them with great eagerness to music. To hire a Piano-forte was impossible, but the mistress of the hotel obligingly lent me hers.

Turin, 7 November Margaret Benn to Francis Fowke

I have performed with great éclat at Turin . . . One objection to this very rapid way of seeing things is that I shall scarcely find an hour to practice upon the Piano-forte, a point which I have attended to whenever I could. At Geneva I have no instrument, and at Berne I scarcely snatched two hours to play the whole time I was there, but at Zurich and Strasbourg I was very industrious, and I ardently hope that you will find me much improved.

Rome, 2 January 1789 John Benn to John Walsh

The Society of Rome is upon the most agreeable footing for strangers, the principal nobility have entertainments almost every evening, when their houses are thrown open, and the finest music, principally vocal, performed in them. There is very little ceremony at these meetings, except being in full dress in which an Englishman rarely finds himself at his ease. The attention which Mrs Benn's play has received in Italy, has been most uncommonly flattering. I may indulge myself in the pleasure of this observation to her Uncle.

Naples, 17 February John Benn to Francis Fowke

The fame your sister has acquired in the musical world is very great. We have had many very pleasant concerts, particularly at Rome. I think there is no fear at present of the death of the Instrument—it is so strongly nourished by praise.

Rome, 8 March Margaret Benn to Francis Fowke

I am sure you will smile when I tell you that in the midst of the hurry of seeing curiosities, and attending conversaziones I found out a modulation master just before I left Rome. I took two or three lessons and mean to resume them the ten days we shall continue here—I fear with little effect, as I know it is only early habit that works the wonders I now sigh for.

28 March Margaret Benn to Francis Fowke

I have had little opportunity of practising since my return to Rome and during my stay at Naples, but I think upon the whole I have paid more attention to it than could have been expected during a tour that afforded so much variety. I have lately attended to modulation (I think I see you smile) under a singing master, but so many of the curiosities of this place were left unseen, that I could only snatch opportunities for modulation . . . [on sight-seeing] . . . I have rather chosen to return to the most interesting than to scramble over everything.

Basle, 9 June John Benn to Francis Fowke

I have been able to borrow a very good Piano-Forte here, and there is a good circulating library of French books in the town.

13 June Margaret Benn to Francis Fowke

I have lately been very attentive to Modulation. I give my time entirely to that one subject, without practising Harpsichord lessons which I can always command.

Plombières, 20 June Margaret Benn to Francis Fowke

I have brought a Piano forte with me from Bale which I procured with a great deal of difficulty.

23 June John Benn to Francis Fowke

I have also sent the Piano Forte, which we shall receive tomorrow. The preludes and cadences advance most rapidly; I assure you when you hear them, you will be pleased.

22 July Margaret Benn to Francis Fowke

You have not told me if you approved of the manner in which I was studying modulation—as near as I can remember it is the course you formerly put me in. I was very eagerly engaged in it when my fever [the result of a miscarriage] interrupted my labours . . . within these three or four days I have resumed my play, but I cannot yet attend to modulation.

2 August Margaret Benn to Francis Fowke

Since I left England I have never made so little use of my time in music as at this place. My illness has scattered my attention a thousand different ways.

Not the least striking aspect of Margaret's tour was the full support she received from her husband and her wider family. For the Fowkes, there was no question of a talented young woman pianist giving up music after marriage. Quite to the contrary, great pride was taken in her continuing achievements.

A major concern during her Grand Tour was the provision of suitable instruments. For any young woman whose music was of the uncommitted kind, merely a means to a social end, travel was not incompatible with limited musical ambition; keyboard-playing could be taken up as and when instruments were available. But for the dedicated young pianist, the frequency of change in the place of abode during the Grand Tour posed a serious obstacle to the goal of regular practice on a suitable instrument. Until she embarked at Harwich Margaret was at pains to ensure that she had access to her own instrument. Thereafter, the expense, the inconvenience of constant removal, and the likelihood of damage made travelling with an instrument an impractical option. The only alternative was to hire a series of instruments for several weeks at a time at each of the main destinations. If the instrument met with approval, it might at least be taken on to the next destination for a relatively modest payment. During her journey south, Margaret hired pianos at Brussels, Dusseldorf, and Strasbourg. At Zurich she failed to find an instrument but was allowed access to one by the mistress of the hotel where she was staying. Any establishment patronized regularly by English ladies would quickly have realized the advantages of maintaining an instrument on the premises, and many establishments seem to have done this. In Italy, Margaret played on different pianos in Turin, Rome, and Naples. On the return journey she hired an instrument in Basle, which she then took with her to Plombières, where she was making a more extended stay to take the waters, following her first miscarriage. If she gained no other musical benefit from her year

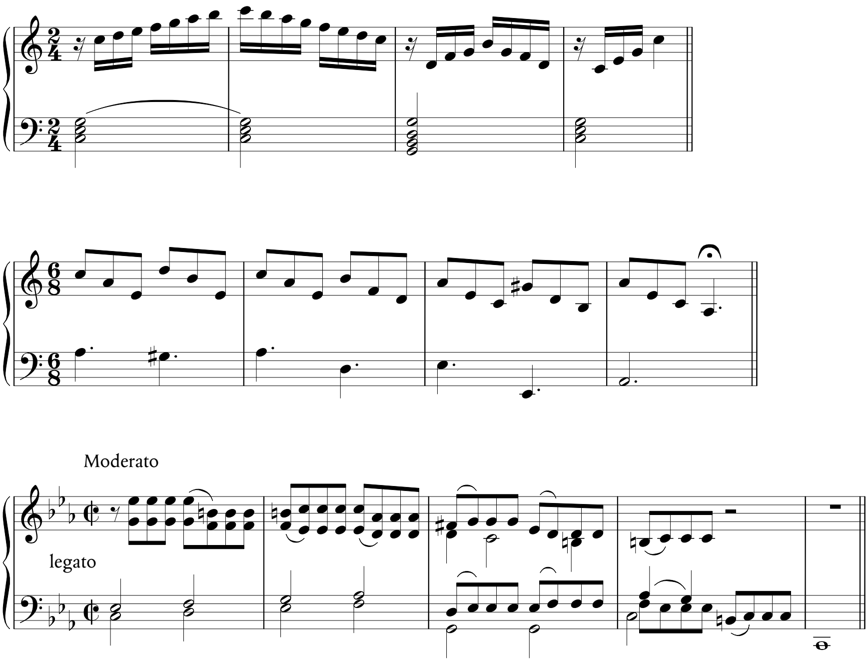
abroad, Margaret, like many English travellers, at least built up considerable experience of French and Italian pianofortes.

Her regime of practice was at its most intense during the journey south to Italy; if circumstances allowed, she worked at her instrument for at least four hours a day. Her objective is quite clear; she wished to be ready for an Italian début. Her attempts to arrange tuition with leading musicians, however, met with only limited success, and she encountered a phenomenon new to her as an employer of teachers—the musician who no longer needed to teach. At Strasbourg she approached Pleyel, only to discover that he was not available for hire. For someone who had been used to having insignificant musical minions wait on her every need in Calcutta, this was a setback. Yet the need to have at least a few consultation lessons with a professional of high standing was a pressing one. For one thing, the social circumstances in which young women learned their keyboard skills left open the possibility that spectacular misapprehensions about true levels of accomplishment could develop. Studying in the privacy of their own home, spurred on by the compliments of uncritical relatives, and working under the tutelage of masters whose financial interests lay in maintaining an illusion of progress for as long as possible, women could easily be deceived. This was perhaps an especially real danger in provincial or colonial locations, where there were few opportunities to hear playing of the highest quality. For someone as musically perceptive about the performance of others, and as deeply uncertain of her own abilities as Margaret was, a very real question must have been whether she was as good as her friends, relatives, and teachers told her she was. The positive evaluation of a musician like Pleyel would give the necessary reassurance. Yet there was also a specific reason why she needed to seek further assistance. For all her efforts in India, she had still failed to master the art of improvising cadenzas. This was a serious problem, since it was precisely in the ornamental cadences ('cadenzas') that a young woman's appreciation of fashionable style was most likely to be evaluated. At least there could be no better place than Italy in which to conquer this final hurdle. In Rome, Margaret sought out a 'Modulation Master', but she was not sanguine about her chances, commenting with regret that 'it is only early habit that works the wonders I now sigh for'. At last, however, she began to make progress. On the journey back, she wrote to her brother, who had struggled to assist her with this very difficulty in India:

Basle, 13 June 1789 Margaret Benn to Francis Fowke

> I have lately been very attentive to Modulation. I give my time entirely to that one subject, without practising Harpsichord lessons which I can always command. The method I follow is this. I endeavour in all the different Major keys to pass by the 7th of the 5th to the 5th, 4th, 6th, 3rd and second, breaking the chords in different ways. This does not seem very difficult, and yet I am continually puzzled in the execution. My master at Rome (Marsi) [Masi] is a much finer performer than Clementi, and excelled particularly in preludes and capricios. I prevailed upon him to write down a few of the former, and learning them by heart and playing them with the most brilliant execution is another part of my course. I give the same attention to our old set of Giordani, 15 of

Ex. 5. Preludes in C major, A minor, and C minor (M. Clementi, *Introduction to the Art of Playing the Piano Forte*, London, 1801)



> which I can now play by heart. I likewise write down different combinations of Marsi's and Giordani's passages, sometimes with tolerable success. This is I think the way in which you used to put me.[4]

Her husband could now report that 'preludes and cadences advance most rapidly'.[5] The prelude had a distinct function from that of the cadenza. It was a short warm-up piece to familiarize the fingers with a particular key. Clementi includes a short prelude before each group of pieces (Ex. 5). These examples illustrate the prelude as a prototype for the study, an exploration of a particular technical or expressive feature. Margaret's teacher in Rome, Girolamo Masi, had the idea of publishing a set of dual-purpose pieces: *Twenty-Five Preludes in Three Parts for the Piano Forte most of which may be used as Cadenzas.* The player is provided with alternative endings. When used as preludes, the first-time bar must be omitted. Masi's preludes aim to capture the feeling of improvisation: 'Particular attention must be paid by the Performer, to those words which continually occur indicating a change in the time. As these preludes are written in imitation of that freedom which proceeds from the flow of extempore imagination' (Ex. 6). This would have been much more taxing on the musical memory than any of the Giordani cadences she had studied in India, but

[4] Fowke MS E8, 46. [5] Fowke MS E8, 49.

Ex. 6. Prelude in A major (G. Masi, *Twenty-Five Preludes in Three Parts for the Piano Forte*, London, n.d.)



Margaret, at least in her own estimation, seems to have achieved 'a brilliant execution', though whether she learned to cope with her problem of insertion is not recorded. Even now, she could not improvise, and had to rely upon combinations of pre-composed cadenzas, to provide a semblance of originality and style.

The reward for all her efforts was finally to come in the English-dominated soirées of Roman society. In her letters to her brother, she is reticent about these occasions, but her husband, hardly an impartial witness, reported that his wife had achieved some renown as a piano player in the very country lauded by most Englishwomen as the high temple of musical fashion. To achieve even a modest success here was worth any number of dubious triumphs in far-flung Calcutta. John Benn

Ex. 6. *Continued*



reported his wife's Italian début with great pride, clearly regarding the episode as in some way having set the seal on her musicianship. The wider Fowke family was equally happy to accept reports of her success in Italy, as incontrovertible proof of her hard-won status as an accomplished musician. Francis wrote to say that their uncle John Walsh had expressed himself 'perfectly delighted with your musical performances being so much admired in the very land of music'. Reality was not to be allowed to destroy this happy illusion. He thus cautioned her that her uncle 'thinks your taste will be much improved there, so you must say nothing to the contrary'.[6] The attitude of Francis to his sister at the height of her powers is interesting.

[6] Ormathwaite MS D546/26; 20 Feb. 1789.

He remained encouraging, making light of her difficulties in maintaining regular practice:

London, n.d. [*c*.1789] Francis Fowke to Margaret Benn

> I have no doubt but I shall find you very much improved on the P. Forte notwithstanding the interruptions your practice has received, because you are so far advanced that an interruption of weeks does not throw you *back*, and the eagerness with which you then proceed when you *have* an opportunity *almost* makes it equal to regular practice. It is different with those in my stage of the business to whom the *Nulla dies sine lineâ* is an indispensible rule.[7]

He often adopts a tone of self-denigration, when comparing Margaret's exalted efforts to his own paltry performance. On several occasions, perhaps with a touch of humour, Francis calls his sister a 'professor': 'I have no doubt as you say but I shall find Tippey much improved, tho she is now so near the head of her profession. In the advanced stage she is, a little intermission of practice has not the fatal effect it has with us bunglers.'[8]

Nabobs and the Italian Opera

Writing to a friend in Europe in 1778 to persuade her to visit India, Margaret Fowke sought to paint a favourable picture of the active musical and social life of Calcutta, with its balls, concerts, plays, and masquerades. She could not deny, however, that there was one significant respect in which Calcutta would be found wanting: it had no Italian opera house.[9] Italian vocal music was in general markedly under-represented in Calcutta's amateur musical culture. Much vocal music was imported into India and performed there in the 1770s and 1780s, but Handel arias, English opera songs, glees, canzonets, and national 'airs' were all more widely distributed and performed than Italian opera songs. The reason for this was almost certainly the lack of Italian musicians in late eighteenth-century India. In London, the valuable trade in 'favourite' songs from the latest King's Theatre productions swung into action the moment that the verdict of the opera audience was known. Any pieces received with acclaim were quickly published, and the repertoire was then extensively promoted, first by the opera stars themselves in fashionable soirées, and then, with the assistance of an army of lesser Italian music masters, by amateur musicians in provincial centres such as Dublin, Edinburgh, and Bath. Without the active support of Italian music teachers, the repertoire failed to achieve the dominant position in India that it did in London. When Anglo-Indians returned to England, they took active steps to remedy the situation, learning the Italian language, attending the King's Theatre, inviting the opera stars to private soirées, and employing Italian music masters. It is as though by doing so they were tacitly acknowledging the provinciality of their colonial musical background.

[7] Ormathwaite MS D546/26, 49.
[8] Ormathwaite MS D546/26; 26 June 1789.
[9] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS D10, 5.

Yet the Anglo-Indian espousal of Italian opera was by no means only a question of updating cultural taste. There were strong social factors too. With its unambiguous association with the aristocratic upper class, Italian opera had a potent appeal for any Anglo-Indian who came originally from an undistinguished background, but who wished to enter high society. There was probably no more effective way of making clear the newly won status than to be seen as a supporter of the King's Theatre. Lord and Lady Clive's espousal of Italian opera thus makes an especially interesting case study in the attendance at music performance for overtly social reasons. When Clive arrived back in England in the summer of 1760, in possession of the largest fortune acquired by an Englishman in eighteenth-century India, he settled down to a life of conspicuous affluence, renting a town house at No. 45 Berkeley Square, which he later purchased outright for £10,500.[10] That the Clives soon became regular supporters the King's Theatre, attending several performances every year, is demonstrated by records of their ticket purchases in the early 1760s, shown in Table 6. For those in the position of the Clive family, it was very important simply to 'appear' in society, and making visits to the King's Theatre, the most prestigious musical venue in London, was one way of achieving this.

Beyond its general social value in establishing their position in the upper echelons of London society, Italian opera was on one occasion used by the Clives for an overtly political purpose. In 1764, aware of the changing public mood, the East India Company sought to forestall criticism of its activities in India by acting decisively to curtail the abuses.[11] Not without some irony in view of the manner in which his own fortune had been acquired, Clive was reappointed Governor of Bengal with specific instructions to stamp out corrupt practices such as the receipt of 'presents' (i.e. bribes). Margaret was fully expecting to travel with her husband, but, at the last moment, the discovery of her pregnancy obliged her to remain in London, among a small but close-knit circle of friends. Her letters at this period show a woman of a retiring disposition, more at ease with country life than London society. Her decision in March 1765 to organize a prestigious musical soirée for her fashionable acquaintances, featuring the leading Italian opera star in England and the two Mozart children, is sufficiently out of character as to require some explanation. The reason is almost certainly to be found in the impending election of directors to the East India Company. The contest was the latest round in the struggle between the supporters of Clive and those of his bitterest critic, the Irishman Lawrence Sulivan.[12] The correspondence of the Ducarel family around the time of the election provides clear evidence that Lady Clive was canvassing on behalf of her husband.[13] Her efforts were not without result. James Ducarel wrote to his sister Maria to complain that she had not travelled to London with their mother to vote for Clive. This would have entailed the family abandoning their previous allegiance

[10] T. G. P. Spear, *The Nabobs: A Study of the Social Life of the English in Eighteenth Century India* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 108, 120.

[11] P. J. Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 179.

[12] M. Bence-Jones, *Clive of India* (London: Constable, 1974), 221, 223.

[13] GRO, Gloucester, Ducarel MS D2091/F7/F9/F10.

Table 6. Attendance at Italian opera by Lord and Lady Clive, 1762–1764[a]

Date	Account book entry	Performance
1762		
5 June	Paid at the Opera & for Books etc 1-5-0	King's Theatre (5 June) *Arianna e Teseo* (pasticcio)
14 November	Paid for 4 places at the Opera & Books 2-5-0	King's Theatre (13 November) *Il Tutore e la Pupilla* (pasticcio)
1763		
3 February	Paid at the Opera House at the Burletta 1-3-0	King's Theatre (3 February) Galuppi: *La Calamita di Cuori*
5 March	Paid at the Opera 1-1-0	King's Theatre (5 March) Bach: *Orione, o sia Diana Vendicata*
7 May	Paid at the Opera and for books 1-4-0	King's Theatre Bach: *Zanaida*
12 November	Paid for an Opera Glass for my Lord	
1764		
28 January	Paid at the Opera house & for a book 1-3-0	King's Theatre (28 January) *Leucippo* (pasticcio)
17 March	Paid at the Opera two places and book 1-2-6	King's Theatre (17 March) Cocchi: *Alessandro nell'Indie*
12 May	Paid at the Opera & for two books 1-4-0	King's Theatre (12 May) Giardini: *Enea e Lavinia*

[a] NLW, Aberystwyth, Clive MSS 17–20.

to Sulivan, but with Clive now in the ascendant as the new Governor of Bengal, it was essential not to offend Lady Clive, whose husband, as James Ducarel put it, 'could make our fortunes or ruin us in Bengal'.[14] It was not to be so easy. A few years later, James wrote home with evident regret: 'Rapid fortunes are now totally at an end.'[15] The Berkeley Square concert was surely timed to coincide with the climax of Margaret's campaign on behalf of her husband.[16] The day before the concert was due to take place, she wrote to inform Clive of what she was planning:

Berkeley Square [London], 12 March 1765, 8 in the Morning — Margaret Clive to Robert Clive

rec[eive]d [by Lord Clive] Nov[ember] 1765

. . . Tomorrow I shall have a great deal of Company indeed all the people of quality etc I am on an intimate footing with, or that like me and music, to hear Manzoli sing here,

[14] Ducarel MS D2091/F10, 16. [15] Ducarel MS D2091/F7, 4.
[16] I. Woodfield, 'New Light on the Mozarts' London Visit: A Private Concert with Manzuoli', *Music & Letters*, 76 (1995), 195.

accompanied by Mr Burton on the harpsichord, on which the little Mozarts, the boy aged 8 the girl 12 will also play most completely well and this together with two good Fidlers and a Bass will be all the concert I shall have, & which I hope will be a good return for all the routs I have been invited to. At Manzoli's benefit I gave him a bank bill of 30 l and took some tickets but did not go to the benefit being afraid of seeing another riot. This man's singing is beyond any thing I have ever heard; the compass of his voice is not so great as some others, but his taste and manner exceed every thing. I had a mind to have Ned [her son Edward] hear him and be seen by the company.[17]

This occasion has a musical significance that extends well beyond the Anglo-Indian musical community. It marks the only recorded occasion on which the castrato Manzuoli, a significant influence on the young Mozart's early contact with Italian opera, is known to have performed with the young composer. From Lady Clive's brief description, it is clear that at least seven performers were scheduled to appear at her concert: Manzuoli; Burton (a keyboard player); the two young Mozarts; two violin players and a cellist. It is not unreasonable to suppose that Mozart might have been asked to accompany Manzuoli in some songs. Gerard Gustavus Ducarel, who visited Berkeley Square prior to his own embarkation for India, reported that songs out of 'Ezio', Manzuoli's first big hit, were being sung there:

[London, 5 February 1765] Gerard Gustavus Ducarel to his mother

Went to Mrs Hassets. She playd us as quite new & the most difficult thing Bachs Concerto even God Save. James [his brother] was all admiration & wanted to send them to you directly. But I have undecided him. & as he wish[es] to make you some musical Present have put him in a better way. From Mrs Hasset we went to my Lady Clive where we dind & were receivd with the greatest good nature. Drew her Layships Profile to carry to my Lord. She also gave us a letter from young hopeful [Clive's son] to Papa & the Opera Ezio, out of which a young Lady there sung me some beautiful songs butt particularly mi dóna mi rende.[18]

The song mentioned by Ducarel was one of three songs contributed by Pescetti to the pasticcio, all sung by Manzuoli. The purchase of 'Ezio' for Lord Clive, the performance of songs from the work by a companion of Lady Clive's, the implication in her letter that she had already heard the star singer, and finally the invitation to Manzuoli to perform at Berkeley Square all demonstrate the strength of her current interest.

After the departure of her husband (one day before the Mozarts' first public concert), Lady Clive committed herself to striving for a deeper understanding of opera through study of the language. Henry Clive wrote to Robert on 13 February 1765: 'She amuses herself with learning Italian and Music, and I dare say when you return you will find her a complete Mistress of the former'.[19] Later that year it emerged that she was hoping to become fluent enough to interpret for Clive on an Italian tour:

[17] NLW, Aberystwyth, Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 34.
[18] Ducarel MS D2091/F10, 8. [19] NLW, Aberystwyth, Clive MS 52.

Berkeley Square [London], 15 December 1765 — Margaret Clive [to John Carnac]

> . . . and the rest of my time was very comfortably spent in my, shall I say what? my studies. Yes, Mr Carnac, because I am such a young lady I am studying music and Italian at such a rate that I can hardly mind any thing else. My vanity is flattered by thinking I shall serve Lord Clive as interpreter when we travel thro' Italy, and in that having any taste for what most people go thither to see, I expect to have my ears highly delighted by their delicate pronunciation, both in speaking and singing.[20]

Her keen anticipation of hearing Italian music performed in Italy comes across clearly, but it is doubtful whether she would have been fully satisfied. Many prospective English travellers shared this dream; nearly as many were disappointed when they heard what was actually on offer. Not infrequently in the late eighteenth century, the most accomplished performers of Italian opera were to be found at the King's Theatre. Before leaving for India, Philip Francis had visited Italy. Much to his surprise, he heard 'little or no music'. He could only conclude that the English import all the music from Italy, like claret from France: 'Commodities are not to be found upon the spot where they grow, but among the people who can purchase them.'[21]

A telling comment on Lady Clive's motivation for developing her interest in Italian opera comes in a letter written shortly before she left for Paris:

Westcombe, 28 January 1767 — Margaret Clive to Robert Clive

> I have liked operas ever since I learn'd Italian, and I am now vastly pleased with them whether serious, or comic—in the latter we are best servd this winter, there being only the head man (Guarducci) much liked in the serious. The present favorite Burletta is all the taste and I am really as well pleased with it as anybody. It is called la buona figliuola, and there is a continuation of the story to be next performed. I remember once your wondering at my wanting this sort of taste, and your persuading me to try to like Italian music as an act of obedience. I did try, and I have therein succeeded, but I do not go very often, because I do not like to go out very often.[22]

The phrase 'as an act of obedience' is a remarkable one to have been applied to the acquisition of a musical taste. Evidently, Lady Clive had at first disliked Italian opera but had taken it up to please her husband. Her intentions are clear enough. With her husband's high social and political ambitions, it would be quite inappropriate to have a wife who disliked Italian opera; she must learn to like it! Musical understanding followed later, and it is interesting that she acknowledges the role that study of the language played in her growing appreciation of the genre. The extent to which Italian was understood by King's Theatre audiences in the late eighteenth century is far from certain. A number of prominent Anglo-Indians, however, took its

[20] BL, OIOC, Sutton Court MS F128/27.

[21] B. Francis and E. Keary, eds., *The Francis Letters* (London, n.d.), i. 422.

[22] Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India'.

study very seriously, and it is at least possible that their experience of India played some part in their willingness to do so.

Having eventually acquired a genuine love for Italian opera, Lady Clive endeavoured to pass it on to her daughters. The extent of her continuing attendance at the King's Theatre is unknown, but a volume of Italian opera airs survives in a small collection of music at Powis Castle that once belonged to the Clive family. She certainly continued to attend concerts. On 28 January 1769, she paid five guineas for a subscription to 'Bach's Concert'.[23] There is no bookplate or other physical indication in the opera collection that this particular work belonged to Lady Clive herself, but the works in the volume all date from the 1770s and were probably therefore bought for the use of her young daughters.[24] The collection includes the following operas:

- The | SONGS | in | La Buona Figliuola | composed by | Sig^r Nicolo Piccini (R. Bremner, n.d.).
- The | FAVOURITE | SONGS | in the | OPERA | IL CARNOVALE DI VENEZIA | by Sig^r Guglielmo (R. Bremner, n.d., *c.*1772).
- The favourite | Songs | as sung by | Sig^ra Sestini | in the COMIC OPERA | La Marchesa Giardiniera | composed by | Sig^r Giordani (Welcker, n.d., *c.*1775).
- The | FAVOURITE | SONGS | In the | OPERA | SOFONISBA (R. Bremner, n.d., *c.*1773).
- The | FAVOURITE | SONGS | in the | OPERA | ALESSANDRO NEL INDIE | Del Sig^r Corri (R. Bremner, n.d., 1774).

Only very late in his life is there any evidence to suggest what Clive, the active arbiter of his wife's operatic tastes, actually thought about opera himself. In 1773 he travelled to France and Italy, and his letters home to Margaret describe briefly several of the performances he attended. In Paris, he appears to have been impressed by the size and magnificence of the opera house, the quality of the audience, the dancing, the scenes, anything but the music:

Versailles, 5 December 1773 Robert Clive to Margaret Clive

> We have been to the Opera, the Italian Commedy and the Boulevards . . . You remember seeing the Opera House when we were last at Paris, only imagine what must be the effect when that House was well lighted up and filled by the Royal Family and all the great Personages of France. Indeed in magnificence and Grandeur it exceeds all Description and I am persuaded I shall never see such a sight again. The Stage was filled with at least 300 Personages all as fine as Gold, Silver Brocade and Tissue could make them. There were at least 60 Dancers not one bad one among them. The best was Mad^elle Heinil and Guimar. You may remember the last who danced with such Grace and Elegance at Paris. There were at least 100 who sang in Chorus, the rest were actors, actresses and Military. The Scenery was Grand beyond all conception. Perhaps Mr Kellsall may give you a better Description of this Spectacle for it is time for me to have done with the Subject.[25]

[23] NLW, Aberystwyth, Clive MS 146.
[24] Woodfield, 'New Light on the Mozarts' London Visit', 198.
[25] Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India'.

If Lady Clive was hoping for a more detailed account from others of the party, she was probably disappointed. One of Clive's companions, more or less ignoring the opera, amusingly recounted the discomfort he suffered, as a result of overcrowding:

Paris, 6 December 1773 Mr Beaumont[26] to Margaret Clive

> And how much we were delighted at the Opera last night. We were placed in the Ampitheatre among the Ambassadors. My Rotundity to be sure was not so much considered as it ought to have been for my Ease, as the Master of Ceremonies fixed me on a Bench one of 5, which would not with propriety contain more than 4. And my being at the End I had not more than Six Inches of bench to sit upon . . . the Theatre is as Magnificent as you can imagine and cost £140,000—the Scenery the most Elegant, the Ballets the most Elegant and expensively dressed, Madame Heinel the first Woman. And the Company made the most splendid appearance that I ever saw.[27]

Once in Italy, Clive certainly lost no time in attending the opera at Rome, where he saw Lovatini, some of whose performances in 'La buona figliuola' in London he had almost certainly seen:

Rome, 12 January 1774 Robert Clive to Margaret Clive

> The first night of our arrival we went to the Barletta Opera where the music was very fine. After we had sat some time a great noise of Applause ran all over the Theater upon the appearance of a certain Performer and to my very great surprise he turn'd out to be Senior Lovatini who is a great Favorite. We have been likewise to the Serious Opera, the Music likewise good, the Dancers perform well but in the hopping Way. But what is most disgusting of all the Dancers and Singers performing female Parts as a Man or rather *No Man* dressd in Womens Cloaths, for it seems the Pope and his Cardinals are so virtuous that they will not give the Spectators an Opportunity of transgressing one of the Ten Commandments. Pray tell Strachey that the Women throw their legs about them in such a manner that they discover black yellow and green Breeches as they did at Rio Janeiro.[28]

In Naples, Clive was impressed by the size of the opera house. Once again, he heard a singer who had performed in London:

Naples, 21 January 1774 Robert Clive to Margaret Clive

> The Opera House is the largest I ever saw; it will contain 3,000 People. The singers are very indifferent and the Dancers shocking. The principal Singer is Amici who sang some Years ago in England in the Barlettas. She is now become a serious Performer and if you believe the English she is greatly improved.[29]

Mozart had a high regard for the singer, and might well have concurred with this last point.

[26] Perhaps a relative of Anselm Beaumont. Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes*, 236.
[27] Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India'.
[28] Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India'.
[29] Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India'.

Descriptions of opera performances attended by Anglo-Indians tend (like those of other English travellers) to be uninformative on matters of most interest to posterity, concerning theatrical staging or musical performance. An unusual exception is Francis Fowke's description of an opera performance he attended in Paris. It includes a rare description of an eighteenth-century orchestra tuning up:

Paris, 4 May 1788 Francis Fowke to Margaret Benn

They seem to have many good comedians—but the point in which they appear to me to have the greatest superiority is in characters of the most perfect simplicity, and they have it equally in drawing and acting them. There are two of these in a new opera called Sargines or L'Eleve de l'Amour and I think I never saw any thing more charming than the performance of the part of one [of] them, a young peasant, by a girl. The young peasant is in love with a country girl which is equally well performed only that I think the part does not give so much scope. These characters have very little to do with the piece itself; the audience is interested for them merely by their natural expression of fondness for each other. This is quite a new piece; it is very much the story of Cymon as you may guess by the title. I think I would venture to predict that it will come on the English stage, it is so much in the style of Richard Coeur de Lion. It is a pity it was not set by Gretry. There were one or two pretty duets by these pretty puppets, but nothing else that struck me as above mediocrity. There is a very good scene in this of a town on fire and the women and children come out of the town and run about the stage in a very natural manner. In point of music I see no advantage the French have over us but fine choruses, the fullness of which I think very fine, and they act them with great spirit, sometimes walking and running in confusion about the stage, where the subject requires it, and continuing to sing the whole time. I was very much struck with this in the opera of Armida. Before Armida quits the Pagan camp an old Pagan hero is brought in desperately wounded (I forget his name); the whole assembly breaks out into the most passionate expression of revenge and run about in the agitated manner I have described. But I have in this as in the rest of my descriptions paid no attention to order. I should have conducted you first to the Opera House and seated you before it begins. The House is a very handsome one, and in this as in all the French Theatres there are no posts or pillars to interrupt the spectator's view and this has a pleasing effect in the general appearance of the House. There are different galleries nearly the same number and in the same manner as at our Opera House, but they go shelving off like the two shilling and one shilling gallery the highest being the farthest from the stage. (This order is a little interrupted by the projection of one gallery near the top at the Opera House, but not at the Italian Theatre.) This shows the company to great advantage, but the House is not very well lighted. When you have sat a little while the gentlemen of the Orchestra come in and then your torments begin—*you have a perfect Dutch Concert.* A fiddler gives you a flourish to the top of the fiddle, another man is hanging over the violoncello treating you with some *thumb* arpeggios, the horns give you flight from the top of their scale to the very lowest growling notes and to complete the whole the bassoon players take the reeds out of their instruments and begin clearing them with a squeak which must be heard to be conceived. This account is not in the least exaggerated and it happens not once but every night. The overture begins and you find that these people are very good performers only that they require a man to beat time to them. For the vocal performers some of the women have good voices and good

> manners *enough*, but I cannot say that of one *man*, but even the women would not be called *singers* at either of our *Play* Houses—no shake, swell or the least attempt at a cadence. A woman who did the part of Dido gave me great pleasure in her manner of expressing the Recitative. The dancing no doubt is very fine, and tho' they have ballets after the Opera sometimes, they often introduce the dance as a part of the Opera. 'Tis a feast; or a queen or a Grand Sensor must be amused, and then a part of the Company sing whilst the others are dancing. I think with a very good effect. Your favourite Perignon is very well received here, but I think M^{lle} Rose and Guimarre are preferred to her. Little La Borie comes in for his plaudits—he attempted one of Vestri's dances.[30]

The intensity of the Italophile musical attitudes espoused by returned Anglo-Indians provided the perfect response to any suggestion that their musical taste had decayed in the heats of Calcutta into a state of colonial provincialism. Those who had gone through this process of musical re-education were in turn very anxious indeed that the tastes of their own children, the next Anglo-Indian generation, should be formed in the context of fashionable Italian vocal culture. After his return from India, Philip Francis settled in London and quickly gained entry into the highest social circles. His wife and daughters attended a wide range of concerts: over a ten-year period (1792–1802) numerous visits to public and private concerts are mentioned; these divide between visits to the *Messiah* and the 'Ancient Music' on the one hand, and the 'New Vocal Concert' and 'Ladies Concert' on the other. But Italian opera was certainly the preferred entertainment. In 1801, for example, members of the family attended performances of Francesco Bianchi's *Alzira* and *Semiramide*.[31] Especially popular were the hit songs of Paisiello. After attending a concert in March 1792, which she describes as 'a beautiful selection', Harriet Francis sent to her sister 'Nel cor più non' from *La Molinara*.[32] On 19 August 1806 Catharine Francis was visited by the Princess of Wales. They sang together the duet 'Pandolfetto' from *I Zingari*. Catharine wrote acerbically: 'I believe it is forbidden to say that a Pr[incess] does anything ill, but it would be too false if I said that she sung as if she had ever received the least instruction.'[33]

The Fashionable Piano Player

Like all keyboard players in late eighteenth-century London, Anglo-Indians had to make one decision of fundamental importance: whether to replace harpsichords with pianofortes. When they furnished their town house in Berkeley Square, the Clives spent lavishly on keyboard instruments. An inventory of the furniture in Berkeley Square, taken when the Clives first rented it from the Earl of Ancram, includes no instruments;[34] an inventory of 1775, taken after Clive's death, demonstrates the extent of their expenditure:

[30] BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/26.
[31] Francis and Keary, *The Francis Letters*, i. 467, 476.
[32] Ibid. 379. [33] Ibid. 635. [34] NLW, Aberystwyth, Clive MS 16.

No. 4 Housekeepers Room
One very small spinnett

No. 6 Lady Clive's Dressing Room
One Piano Forte

No. 7 Dark Middle Room
One Mahogany Box for Music Books

No. 9 Young Ladies Room
One Harpsichord, Leather Cover and Bookstand
One Violin and Case (Dancing Master)
Closet and Passage adjoining
Two Music Stands

No. 12 Great Drawing Room
One large harpsichord and Music Stand
Landing place on the Top of the Great Stairs
One small hand three barrelled Organ on a stand

No. 14 Front parlour
One harpsichord on a Mahogany Frame—leather cover

No. 15 Dining Parlour
One large Organ

No. 28 Housekeepers Room
One Aeolian Harp.[35]

There were doubtless at least as many harpsichords in Clive's other residences. An undated account of goods at Claremont includes two keyboard instruments:

A Harpsichord w[th] leather cover Music desk and 2 pictures
A Piano Forte w[th] Green Cover and Stand and 3 Pictures.[36]

The Clives, as always, led the field in the public display of affluence, but there is little doubt that keyboard manufacturers received a distinct boost to their Anglo-Indian sales from the post-Plassey boom, which saw huge sums disbursed as gifts by Mir Jafar.[37] The predominance of harpsichords in the Clives' keyboard stock is a consequence of the fact that they did the bulk of their purchasing of keyboard instruments in the 1760s. In Lady Clive's correspondence of this period, and in her account books, which include periodic payments for harpsichord removal, there is no mention as yet of the pianoforte.[38]

The Fowkes were in India during the most significant period of transition, the early 1780s. Margaret's silence on an issue which one might suppose would have been one of the major landmarks in the life of a keyboard player at this period is rather telling. Indeed, it is by no means clear at what stage she came to regard the pianoforte as an instrument with a distinct identity. Gradually, however, references to the harpsichord in her letters begin to dwindle, and her interest turns to the newer instrument and its fashionable repertoire. It makes an interesting exercise to count

[35] Clive MS 76.
[36] NLW, Aberystwyth, Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India'.
[37] Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes*, 234.
[38] Clive MS 87.

mentions of the two instruments over five-year periods. Between 1780 and 1784, references to the harpsichord outnumber those to the piano by approximately three to two; both instruments appear to be in regular use, they seem to be regarded as equal in status, and they are considered to a significant extent interchangeable. Between 1785 and 1789, the number of references to the two instruments is broadly equal, but increasingly it is the pianoforte which is mentioned in active contexts relating to the purchase, hire, tuning, or playing of instruments. After 1790, the harpsichord seems to disappear entirely. When the Fowkes returned to England in 1789 after their Grand Tour, it was to a world in which the harpsichord had been utterly eclipsed by its more fashionable rival.

There is every reason to believe that the pianoforte began to attract attention as a status symbol to an even greater extent than had been the case with the harpsichord. An expensive, attractively decorated piano implied a certain economic and social standing; a small shabby instrument might well be taken as evidence of the limited means of its owner. There was every incentive to be seen to be able to afford the latest and most fashionable type. Yet it was not merely a question of physical appearance; the pianoforte was undergoing rapid development, and there were thus good musical reasons for constantly updating one's model. Any 'improvement' in piano design was immediately a selling point. Pianos 'with additional keys' were often advertised, and they were keenly sought by players.[39] A not inappropriate parallel might be with the late twentieth-century market for new cars, appearance and performance being of roughly equal importance to commercial success. Concern with the physical appearance of keyboard instruments comes across very clearly in a letter from Lady Clive to her brother Nevil Maskelyne about a piano she had recently bought from a London dealer:

[London], 18 June 1791 Margaret Clive to Nevil Maskelyne

> I have a very beautiful musical instrument, late made by Mess^rs Gray, a piano forte, which I have an inclination to place at your house, and upon which you may like to hear a master play, now and then, and if little Margaret should ever take a taste for music, I may make her a present of it, in case it should be perfectly her wish and yours. Mr Gray has orders to convey it to you, and to attend in a four days, to tune it, and every now and then you must permit him to call and see that it is in tolerable order. I have directed him so to do, as he knows I am willing to do him credit, and you will be pleased to allow me to satisfy him. A small desk for a music book, may be contrived by Mr Gray. You will please to lay no tea cups, or any that will make a stain upon the piano forte, nor any considerable weights.[40]

The exact nature of the arrangement hinted at by Lady Clive is uncertain. From the point of view of a piano dealer, it might well have been worth some concession to have an example of a 'fine' instrument on display in a fashionable Anglo-Indian London household. As might be expected, the musical Fowke family kept abreast of the latest developments in piano technology, even if they were not always persuaded

[39] NLW, Aberystwyth, Ormathwaite MS G1. [40] BL, OIOC, Photo Eur 287.

to buy. In an undated letter from around 1791, Francis wrote to his sister about a new invention by Walter Clagget, which, incidentally, was endorsed by Haydn: 'It appears to me that the pedals are *very* easily moved in Clagget's improvement—but of that you will best judge when you try them.'[41] In 1802, he recommended Margaret to try an upright: 'Consider how it would stand in your room—for its superior tone and quality of remaining in tune are great recommendations.' There is no mention here about the problematic action of the earliest uprights, but one of the selling points of the instrument was precisely its physical aptness for small spaces.[42]

Two letters from 1805 are particularly illuminating about the Fowkes' attitude to the purchase of pianos. In the first Francis writes to his brother-in-law to give his opinion about two instruments available for hire or sale at the firm of Monzani, a minor London piano dealer:

[London], 18 November 1805 Francis Fowke to John Benn Walsh

> I had been to look at the Pianoforte of which you enclosed the advertisement—I do not much like it. I don't think the mechanism good, that is, it does not answer steadily to the touch, and this, for practice, is of more consequence than the tone, which of this instrument is but very moderate. There are two at Monzani's, one at 15 Guineas, a decent instrument in point of touch and tone, in its appearance but shabby. There is another at 20 Guineas which I think is all the difference of price better than either of the others. The tone is very sweet, and the touch, as far as I can judge, has nothing exceptionable in it. The appearance too is very well. I daresay you might have it upon trial, paying for it only by the month or week. To be sure the sending to and from Warfield at 1s 6d a mile would cut deep into the cost. But at any rate I daresay he would exchange it for any other which he has or may hereafter have, as he is always buying and selling. I shall however continue to look about for you.[43]

Three days later, having obviously made his selection, Francis wrote to his sister about the arrangements for delivery:

[London], 21 November 1805 Francis Fowke to Margaret Walsh

> As Walsh described, I called on Monzani about the Pianoforte, but it cannot be ready this evening—it must be looked over by the workman and put in proper order which will take up two days. I am still better pleased with the instrument on looking at it again, and I am convinced it will answer your purpose perfectly. Unless you wanted a fine one, this has as good an appearance as you could desire, and it seems to me to stand very well in tune. I have told him at any rate to get it ready. If you are in a great hurry for it before next week, you could have it down in the carriage they have on purpose at 1s 6d a mile. Now the packing case would come to 20 shillings. To be sure he would take ten off when it is returned, but then you have to pay the carriage of the case back. I think however that you will keep the *instrument.* Monzani will charge for the hire 15 shillings a month, for one or two months, but less if you should keep it longer. He has no objection whatever to letting you have it on those terms, if you shall not like to buy it.[44]

[41] BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/26, 145.
[42] Ormathwaite MS D546/27; 22 Apr. 1802.
[43] Ormathwaite MS D546/27.
[44] Ormathwaite MS D546/27.

As Ehrlich has pointed out, in these early years of pianoforte manufacture, instruments were sold directly from the workshop to the consumer. Even second-hand instruments were sold this way.[45] In the pre-rail age, supply of pianofortes to inland destinations depended upon carriage by road. In the Broadwood journal of 1785, there is a list giving the departure points of many carters' wagons.[46] In 1811, Elizabeth Walsh was offered the chance to visit the firm's shop, to choose a new piano.[47] Once she had made her selection, she wrote to Broadwood 'to have my new p.f. sent down'.[48] Most of the destinations listed are inland, as it was significantly cheaper to send instruments to major ports like Bristol or Liverpool by sea. At the rates quoted by Monzani, delivery charges would indeed mount up rapidly. Carriage of an instrument for thirty miles would cost £3. 5*s.* 0*d* (45 shillings, plus 20 shillings for the packing case); by comparison, Broadwood, using the inexpensive sea route in 1784, charged only £1 for delivery (15 shillings for the packing case, and 5 shillings for shipping).[49] The rate Monzani charged for hire, 15*s.* per month, lower for longer periods, suggests that a rapid depreciation in value was anticipated. Broadwood offered a similar hiring service, for which 10*s.* 6*d.* was the standard rate.[50]

To make a discriminating choice of a pianoforte was by no means a straightforward matter. In Ehrlich's words, the selection of a pianoforte was 'a mysterious rite, dependent upon mysterious unmeasurable qualities of "tone" and "touch" which few could honestly judge'.[51] Dealers could rely on (and exploit) high levels of consumer ignorance. Unlike many customers in the early nineteenth century, the Fowkes at least approached their purchase of a pianoforte with a very clear idea of what they wanted: in this instance, a practice instrument. Appearance and tone were thus of less significance than the all-important but imperfectly understood quality of evenness of 'touch'. The market for practice instruments, bought exclusively for private exercise and not intended to be heard even in the context of domestic 'concerts', is difficult to estimate, but it was probably significant enough to fuel demand for second-hand or reconditioned pianos, at rates well below those asked for new models. Such instruments would be kept anywhere but in the drawing-room, and their appearance was thus less important and a less than ideal tone might be acceptable. A charming little note from the young Henrietta Fowke to her father Francis concerns access to her practice pianoforte, during a period of house cleaning:

Hampton House, 9 April 1813 Henrietta Fowke to Francis Fowke

> Hannah say's Parker told her that the Breakfast parlour was to be cleaned and locked up, but that cannot be, for I want to go to my Pianoforte every day. To that Hannah says we must remove it to the Drawing room. We cannot attempt that. What must we do?[52]

[45] C. Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History*, rev. edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 43.
[46] D. Wainwright, *Broadwood by Appointment: a History* (London: Quiller Press, 1982), 66–8.
[47] NLW, Aberystwyth, Ormathwaite MS G6; 9 Jan. 1810.
[48] Ormathwaite MS G6; 22 Nov. 1811.
[49] Wainwright, *Broadwood by Appointment*, 62.
[50] Ibid. 55.
[51] Ehrlich, *The Piano*, 43.
[52] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS D14, 5.

Her father's response to this dreadful dilemma is not recorded. In the Clive household, a harpsichord was set aside as a practice instrument for the young pianist daughters of the family:

Oakley Park, 1 November 1799 Margaret Clive to Margaret Maskelyne

> My young lasses here have a very nice pianoforte with the additional keys not quite so small as the smallest, and they are learning to touch it, in *stile.* One of my harpsichords stands near it in the sitting [roo]m, above stairs, and they practise most nobly upon [it].[53]

Once ousted by the pianoforte, many a harpsichord must have ended up in a back room or upstairs in a sitting-room or a bedroom, no longer fashionable, but still of some use.

In the first decade of the nineteenth century, the position of the grand piano as an emblem of wealth and social status was challenged by the concert harp, an instrument increasingly popular with wealthy women amateurs, and, like the piano, undergoing radical transformation. The harp was, if anything, even more aesthetically pleasing a piece of furniture, and could as easily form the centrepiece of a room. A growing literature of music for harp and piano duet is a testament to the instrument's rising appeal. An awareness of new developments in harp manufacture comes in a letter from Mary Fowke (Francis Fowke's wife) to her son, dated 12 September 1813. In it she proudly announces that they have purchased 'one of Ernard's new harps'. Her husband, she writes, 'is much pleased with the principle of it, as one can now play equally well in all keys, even the most uncommon'.[54] Sébastian Erard's double-action harp, to which this letter refers, was patented in London in 1811. When purchasing instruments, about which they knew very little, men often had recourse to the opinions of 'knowledgeable' friend. One instance of this is recorded in the Fowke correspondence when a musical friend proffered his opinion about a harp:

[London], n.d. R. Davenport to Francis Fowke

> P.S. I have seen the Harp . . . It appears to me to be rather small, but I am not sure. Very plain and reddish wood, pedals all in order, and I think the strings placed at distances equal to that you have. Of tone cannot pretend to judge. If you should go to try it take a **Y** [tuning fork] with you, as all the strings are let down. It is at an Apothecary's shop and seems to be a fair thing.[55]

A poor quality instrument stood a fair chance of being sold if neither the purchaser nor his 'adviser' had sufficient knowledge to make a discriminating judgement.

An analysis of the music Margaret played after her return to Europe suggests that her approach to selecting piano music was significantly affected by her return to London and her experiences in Italy. The favoured genre remained the same, the accompanied sonata, but she appears increasingly to have subjected her own tastes

[53] BL, OIOC, Photo Eur 287. [54] Fowke MS D14, 15. [55] Fowke MS E9, 46.

Table 7. Piano music played by Margaret Benn, 1788–1790

Composer named	Possible source(s)
Haydn	Franz Joseph Haydn: *Three Sonatas for the Harpsichord or Pianoforte, with an accompaniment for a violin and violoncello*, Op. 40 (London, 1785)
Mazzinghi	Joseph Mazzinghi: *Three Quartetts for a Piano Forte, Flute, Violin and Tenor*, Op. 3 (London, 1788)
Pleyel	Ignace Joseph Pleyel: *Six Sonatas for the Piano Forte or Harpsichord with an accompaniment for a Flute or Violin and Violincello. Dedicated to The Queen of Great Britain* (London, 1788)
Pleyel	Ignace Joseph Pleyel: *Six Grand Lessons for the Harpsichord or Piano-Forte, with an Accompanyment for a Violin . . . dedicated to The King of Prussia* (London, 1788)
Kozeluchi	Leopold Kozeluch: *Trois Sonates pour le Clavecin ou Piano Forte avec Accompagnement d'un Violin ad libitum*, Op. 17 (London, 1787)
Halmandel	Nicolas-Joseph Hüllmandel
Stirkel	Johann Franz Xaver Sterkel: *Six Sonatas for the Piano Forte or Harpsichord with an Accompanyment for the Violin*, Op. 3 (London, *c*.1790)
Dussek	Jan Ladislav Dussek: *Six Sonatines pour le Piano Forte ou le Clavecin avec Accompagnement d'une Flutte*, Op. 19 (London, 1793). The Fowkes must either have owned a manuscript copy or an earlier edition.

to the imperative of being seen to be interested in up-to-date music. None of the publications identifiable in her letters from this period dates back more than a year or two. 'Ancient' music has disappeared, and so too have native English composers. Not even Bach or Abel seem to have survived. The new favourites are Pleyel, Mazzinghi, Kozeluch, Haydn, Hüllmandel, Dussek, Sterkel, and Clementi. This is a fair representation of the fashionable London piano world of around 1790 (Table 7). Insights into the reasons underlying her changing preferences in music are to be found in a series of letters on the subject of fashionable piano composers. On 9 October 1788, Francis, obviously in reply to an earlier enquiry from his sister who by now was in Switzerland, wrote: 'I have not lately been in the way of knowing which is the fashionable harpsichord music, but I will inquire.'[56] This is one of the last 'active' references to the older instrument in the Fowke correspondence. The following year, Francis felt able to offer some specific suggestions:

I have neglected to answer an old question of yours of the music now in fashion for the P. Forte. There is a set of Quartets for P. F., Violins and Tenor by Mazzinghi which is much in vogue. I heard Mrs Aldernay play one of them, which I thought very pretty—but they are

[56] BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/26.

very long. Miss Smiths told me there were some Quartets for the same instruments by Pleyel which are thought well of, but I have not heard them.[57]

Francis seems to have been left in no doubt that the criterion for answering his sister's question was that of fashionability, and he clearly believed that this could best be ascertained by asking around in society. On 14 May, John Benn, obviously hoping to distract his wife from the trauma of her recent miscarriage wrote asking for the Mazzinghi, which had been mentioned as being 'much in vogue', and 'any other music that you may think good'.[58] Francis replied that he had already dispatched the Mazzinghi quartets to Margaret in France.[59] Margaret acknowledged the receipt of the quartets, and set out her thoughts about the currently fashionable keyboard repertoire:

Plombières, 20 June 1789 Margaret Benn to Francis Fowke

> I received Massinghi's quartets just before I left Bale. I beg you will tell me which are your favorite ones, as I cannot form a clear idea of them without the accompaniments. Pray do not forget this request. I am much pleased at the idea of your practising your part. I wish you would borrow Pleyel's set which I mentioned to you before (the number is not marked) and look at the accompaniment of the 1st 2nd and 3d Sonata. I am out of all patience with the Harpsichord Composers for making their pieces so long. The finest pieces of music in the world are of a moderate length—the fancy is exhausted thro' so many pages. Harpsichord pieces remind me of Conversations one too often meets with, where whenever a new subject is started every person is anxious to support it by saying something, that the company may not be disgraced by a total silence. How different these spun-out works are to the masterpieces of the first composers, which are so full of fancy and passion that one fears the end of every charming passage. Pleyel has undoubtedly a large share of merit in general, yet I cannot feel the perfection which many people attribute to him. I think him a very successful thief, and the most universal one I ever knew. He steals from every composer I have ever heard in my life, but he weaves these different threads together in a new and elegant manner. I like Haydn's music a thousand times better.[60]

The appreciable change in her attitude to keyboard repertoire seems to be related to the abandonment of the harpsichord. Henceforth, the repertoire and the techniques indelibly associated with the older instrument, notably figured bass, would retain an honoured place in the musical education that the Fowkes provided for their children, but for solo performance in the fashionable world, the pianoforte was to be allowed no rival. Margaret had spent much of the last year practising upon anything up to a dozen different German, Italian, and French pianofortes. Having thus become fully aware of the pianoforte's distinctive identity, she was now seeking to discard music that might be associated with the older instrument. Even though the earlier repertoire from the 1770s that she had once worked on so assiduously was perfectly well suited to the pianoforte, it seemingly had to be put aside. Perhaps to justify in her own mind the abandonment of the old 'harpsichord composers', she

57 Ibid. 58 Fowke MS E8. 59 Ormathwaite MS D546/26. 60 Fowke MS E8, 51.

subjected their works to a severe critique. Through the analogy of the conversation, she seems to be rejecting undue length, textural complexity, and even thematic prolixity. She was a discriminating judge of music, as shown here by her comparison of Pleyel and Haydn, but in this passage there are clear signs that fashion was becoming the dominant arbiter of her taste. The change involved a final rejection of her father's views, which she had in any case long contested. Even so, a final echo of the paternal credo surfaces in a letter from Turin. Boccherini's music, she wrote, 'is much admired and played' and the Turinese were likewise 'partial' to Haydn and Pleyel. But, she reported in a phrase reminsicent of Joseph, they are 'quite free from the affectation of playing only the music of the day'.[61] Just such an affectation, however, seems to have been taking hold of Margaret during the latter stages of her Grand Tour.

Her thirst for new piano music continued unabated during 1790, after her return to England. Her brother, who had access to a much wider circle of musicians, continued to scout for material:

Wimbledon, 27 July 1790 Francis Fowke to Margaret Benn

> Have you got the 17th set of Kozeluchis? Tho' I am in doubt this is a sufficient direction because the edition I saw was printed abroad. But there is in it one of the most pleasing interesting pieces I think I ever heard on the P. forte. It is in F minor four flats. I never heard the instrument sing as it does in this piece. It is quite like a very fine Italian song and seems to have all the variety of Hayden's modulation without his excessive caprices. I have heard Miss Davenport play it twice, both times very well accompanied, without any diminution of pleasure. The accompaniment tho' extremely well made is I think only an accompaniment and aids without taking your attention from the Pforte. Did you ever hear Halmandel? He seems to me inferior to none of them in point of execution and to be possessed of a correct, elegant taste. He play'd a piece of his own that I liked very much. He and his wife (a very pretty modest little Frenchwoman) play'd some duets of Pleyel's that I believe are new—they are remarkably pretty—but that is rather out of your way. Mrs Halmandel sang a Burletta song of Galuppi's which her husband justly observed had that freshness it might be supposed to have been composed but yesterday. This however does not mean that it is exactly in the present style, but it has variety, spriteliness and originality without any thing antique.[62]

Like other English amateurs, the younger generation of Fowkes greatly admired Haydn, but they regarded his music as 'difficult', because of its 'excessive' (by which they seem to have meant more than usually unexpected) modulations. The suitability of the piece by Kozeluch, however, lay not only in its avoidance of Haydnesque extremes but also in the reticence of its accompaniment which would allow his sister's talent to shine. Another recommendation was that he had been able to hear the piece *twice* 'without any diminution of pleasure', a comment that throws a good deal of light on the anticipated 'shelf-life' of such music. But the most interesting passage comes towards the end of the letter when Francis, perhaps reacting against

[61] Ormathwaite MS D546/31. [62] Ormathwaite MS D546/26.

his sister's excessive desire for up-to-the-minute novelty, seems to be arguing, with the support of Hüllmandel, the case for considering fashion a matter of style as much as period. Galuppi had only recently died (in 1785), but his London visit dated back to 1741–3. Music as old as this was acceptable, if its style came across as 'fresh' and not 'antique', as was accepted to be the case with Pergolesi.

Several months later, Francis returned again to the subject of his sister's desire, which he now went so far as to call a 'craving', for new piano music. The passage ends with an amusing instance of how, in Fowke parlance, a complete and abrupt change in the subject of conversation was termed 'a Haydn modulation':

Wimbledon, 11 November 1790 Francis Fowke to Margaret Benn

> A propos of music, I find it very difficult to satisfy your craving after new Piano forte music. As there are no public concerts now you know, I have very little opportunity of hearing Pforte music. There is a new set of Stirkel's of which I have heard one Sonata. Independent of its not being, I think, *very* striking, it depends a great deal upon the accompaniments and that alone would render it unamusing for solitary practice. However, I will look out sharp and see if I cannot get you a set, for I am sensible it must be a great luxury, and reminds me of Benares. But, to make a Haydn modulation, I cannot think there can be any great luxury in windows without shutters.[63]

This frank admission that a month before the start of the regular concert season he could not recommend any new piano music because he had not yet had the chance to hear it being played highlights a significant difference between colonial musical culture and that of the metropolis. In London, performance by a leading professional, often the composer himself, was the driving force behind fashionable musical tastes in keyboard works. Amateur musicians would visit the music shops specifically in order to ask for and purchase pieces with an already established pedigree. With no access to the new generation of leading keyboard composer-performers, or even to their pupils, Calcutta's first experience of new keyboard fashions came second-hand, through published reviews, music sold in shops, and personal collections brought to India by keen amateurs.

The relationship between the public performance of pianoforte repertoire and its availability in the London music shops comes across very clearly in the next letter. If the reported comments of Longman are accurate, the usual pattern, performance in a prestigious public concert at Hanover Square, followed by publication, was by no means universal. It is interesting to observe different composers adopting different strategies. Clementi, it seems, opted to delay publication of works that he had performed in public. Hüllmandel, who developed his career in England largely in the domain of the private concert, seemingly thought it to his advantage that some of his music should be available only to selected pupils:

Wimbledon, 3 December 1790 Francis Fowke to Margaret Benn

> I have sent you the last set published by Pleyel. I have not heard it but I understand it is in high vogue and that alone I suppose will be a sufficient motive with you to

[63] Ibid.

> practise it, tho' I must say I think there is always a good chance for something of merit in Pleyel. I never met with any work of his which had not a good deal in some part or other of it. Longman says this must be the work you saw in manuscript, tho' he does not particularly recollect shewing it you. I cannot get the piece of Clementi's you want by the description of its having been play'd at Harrison's benefit. Longman says he often keeps his pieces in manuscript long after they have been performed in public. However, I will endeavour to get access to the great man himself. I have sent you also a work of Dussek—his 19th. Halmandel recommended it to Miss Davenport and she is very much pleased with it. I heard her play one of them and was pleased with it too. The same night Halmandel play'd one of his own. It seemed to be extremely difficult but I thought it had a great deal of merit too. He play'd it by heart. On inquiry I found that it had been published abroad but never in England. He seemed to think it too difficult for general sale and said it was here only in the hands of such of his scholars as were capable of learning it. If you chuse to have a set I should imagine I should have no difficulty in procuring you one.[64]

A final sign of what could be interpreted as a process of fashionable impoverishment came when Margaret requested a battle piece. Francis responded:

n.d. (*c.*1791) Francis Fowke to Margaret Benn

> I hear very little Pforte music but I will inquire of Charlotte Strachey or the Holts. I thought Raimondi had sent you his battle piece. I should think you could not have better show-pieces than Dussek's or Pleyel's; What! You pant for still greater difficulties, determined to cut out the whole world?[65]

If, through playing Raimondi's *The Favorite Grand Piece Called the Battle* (London, 1791), she acquired a taste for facile representational music, at least she was destined to be well supplied into the new century.

Musical taste in late eighteenth-century England is not easy to describe simply. As McVeigh has pointed out, conflicting ideas were often presented as dichotomies—'virtuosity against pathos, melody against science'. Francis Fowke's correspondence with his sister on the subject of fashionable piano music reflects some of these issues: there is a concern to have material suitable for a display of virtuosity; there is, too, a recognition of the value of some richness of harmony and key in presenting pathos; but the dominant value is that of simplicity. While still in India, Margaret had concluded that this was the highest form of musical expression. Having played Avison's music, she had perhaps read his views on this subject:

> A pompous Display of Art will destroy its own Intentions: on which Account, one of the best general Rules, perhaps, that can be given for musical Expression, is that which gives Rise to the Pathetic in every other Art, *an unaffected Strain of nature and Simplicity.*[66]

In her letter to Warren Hastings, she had cited as examples of music unaffectedly simple, yet able to move a audience, Scottish songs and country dances. This point

[64] Ormathwaite MS D546/26. [65] Ormathwaite MS D546/26, 145.

[66] S. McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 129.

of view, widely held, implied an impatience with length, formal elaboration, textural complexity, and harmonic adventurousness. As a young musician in India, Margaret had explored and admired the riches of Purcell and Handel. She could clearly articulate why Pleyel was much less worthy a composer than Haydn. Yet now, apparently, she was willing to play music largely on the grounds that it was in 'high vogue'. The verdict of public opinion on Pleyel was of as much consequence as any of her private reservations about the composer's lack of originality. If a composer was being talked about with approval, then his music was sure to be worthy of study. To an extent at least there was a narrowing of her taste as an all-consuming preoccupation with fashion started insidiously to circumscribe the broader musical values which she had learned in India. Paradoxically, the Grand Tour, supposedly an experience to broaden the mind, contributed in some measure to the diminishing of Margaret's musical horizons.

The decisive moment in a young woman's piano-playing career would usually come with her marriage. That girls usually gave up music when they got married is a commonplace of the period. For those for whom musical proficiency meant little more than a husband, the chance to abandon their tiresome and futile musical studies was no doubt often accepted with alacrity, and with relief by potential auditors. Jane Austen satirizes the frightful Mrs Elton, who wished to have 'many sweet little concerts' with Emma on the grounds that it would be an inducement for her to keep in practice. In order to demonstrate her superiority, she simply cannot resist listing her married friends who have given up music:

> When I look round among my acquaintances, I tremble. Selina has entirely given up music—never touches the instrument—though she played sweetly. And the same may be said of Mrs Jeffereys—Clara Partridge, that was—and of the two Milmans, now Mrs Bird and Mrs James Cooper; and of more than I can enumerate. Upon my word it is enough to put one in a fright. I used to be quite angry with Selina; but really I begin now to comprehend that a married woman has many things to call her attention. I believe I was half an hour this morning shut up with my housekeeper.

The abandonment of music by married women is a recognizable stereotype of late eighteenth-century English musical culture, and yet it would be wrong to exaggerate its significance. In one sense it was merely part of a much wider pattern. Even today, the vast majority of those who have devoted thousands of hours to music practice in childhood and adolescence in some sense 'give up' music in young adulthood. In the eighteenth century, the renunciation was sometimes a more formal act than it is today, and commentators did not in general recognize personal development or the enrichment of overall musical experience as the still valuable results of an abandoned musical 'career'. Rather it was seen as an absolute waste: 'How often is the labour of years thus lost for ever!'[67] Many women, however, did continue with their music after marriage. In India, the large imbalance between the sexes meant that there were actually quite strong pressures on them to continue to play. The

[67] R. Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 225.

provision of amateur keyboard-playing, for example, was to no small extent dependent on the availability of women. Certainly in the Fowke letters, as many married as unmarried women appear as performers. Especially in musical families, there was a recognition of the waste involved in any renunciation of music, and there were pressures to continue. Francis Fowke was nonplussed when a child, having failed to reply to a letter, announced as his reason that he had 'entirely left off writing'. He tellingly compared this refusal to that of a lapsed woman musician: 'It is like a married Lady's leaving off the Harpsichord; you can only say it is a very great pity, but you cannot press her to a performance that she no longer professes.'[68]

The extent to which women continued to play the piano during their later years was often determined not by any ideological view of its propriety, but by personal inclination and circumstances. Family responsibilities greatly diminished the amount of time for practice. Susan Burney reported a conversation she had with the violinist Salomon, who had told her that if she would 'practice *two hours* a day, *for two years*', she would be able to 'do *anything what ever*' she wished on the piano. A look from her was enough to convince him 'of what an impossible thing he was advising—to a wife—& a mother'. Salomon, a master in the art of flattery, was equal to this rebuff: 'He afterwards wth flattering sort of interest gave me more feasible advice—to play easy music— "& then", he added, "you will play it *as nobody else plays it*".'[69] She subsequently expressed frustration that 'the power of keeping up the little I am able to do in music, sh^{d} frequently be attended wth such difficulty', whilst remaining philosophical, well aware that that things would not change: 'In such cases I can only end wth the *useful saying* that "It will all be the same a hundred years hence" & so *Je me console*.' After her return to England, Lady Clive kept up her keyboard studies for purely personal reasons, largely to combat boredom. On 6 December 1762, she wrote to Major Carnac: 'I am now studying music very diligently, and did my Genius and finger equal my assiduity and fondness for it, I should be a good Player, but I expect no such thing. It however serves to prevent any Part of my Time which is not better employed from hanging heavy on my Hands.'[70] Two years later she had still not given up hope of progress:

Berkeley Square, 1 January 1764 Margaret Clive to John Carnac

> I continue fond of music, and of course am pleased with musical People. I have been so much in the Country since I came from India and have had so little Teaching that I have not improved much, but as I am pursuing the study, I do not despair of making [myself] acquainted with as much of the Science as is necessary to afford me Pleasure before I am very ancient.[71]

Music for her was to be a private matter, a solace during later years.

During her early married years, Margaret Fowke suffered a series of miscarriages and still-births. At this troubled period, music was an obvious consolation, and hard practice had the merit of affording a temporary release from deep-seated anxiety. As

[68] Ormathwaite MS D546/26; 10 Jan. 1789.
[69] BL, Egerton MS 3692; 19 Oct. 1789.
[70] BL, OIOC, Strachey MS F128/27.
[71] Ibid.

she wrote from Leatherhead in 1792 after a recent miscarriage: 'Do not suppose that I dwell too much on the subject—books, music, conversation and my garden, occupy my time most agreeably.'[72] With the arrival of her first child, however, music begins to disappear from her letters and only returns when the new generation of Fowkes began their musical studies. Francis was supportive during the period of decline:

Wimbledon, 24 August 1792 Francis Fowke to Margaret Benn

> I am quite contented with your long absence from the Pforte. The greatest performers' fingers get estranged from the instrument and forget their 'cunning' in a shorter time than could be conceived, seeing how much they are at home when in full practice.[73]

A major distraction was now the Napoleonic War, an understandable preoccupation of a family with strong army and empire connections. Although we learn little about Margaret herself at this period, her letters give a full account of her children's early progress on the pianoforte and thus provide fascinating insights into how musical techniques and tastes were transmitted from one generation to the next.

Anglo-Indian Quartet Parties

The attributes of the late eighteenth-century English gentleman dilettante, boundless enthusiasm for music allied to limitless incompetence in its practice, were as frequently on display in London as in Calcutta, yet the circumstances of musical life in India, in particular its isolation from the mainstream, perhaps allowed misapprehensions about standards to develop more easily there. The return home could thus be a salutary experience for the male amateur. A violinist called Captain Kyd made something of an impact in Calcutta in 1785. Joseph Fowke described him as 'a very fine genius much vitiated by the abominable taste of the times'.[74] Years later, back in England as a Colonel,[75] his violin-playing failed to impress: 'Morse has been frequently talking of introducing me to a Col: Kydd a very *fine* violin player lately arrived from the East. The introduction has taken place & I think him the very *worst* hand I ever heard.'[76] Low though standards in England sometimes were, they could rarely compare with what India had to offer.

An example of the return of an Anglo-Indian amateur violinist and his integration into the musical life of England is Francis Fowke. There is every reason to believe that the level of attainment that he had reached in India was modest indeed. On one occasion, his father had commented acidly to his sister: 'If your brother continues to rest his fiddle upon the first joint of his forefinger it is absolutely impossible that he can ever arrive at any tolerable execution.'[77] About his own playing

[72] Ormathwaite MS D546/33, 15. [73] Ormathwaite MS D546/26.

[74] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E5, 75.

[75] Colonel Kydd was superintendent of the Calcutta Botanical Gardens. *The Letters of Sir William Jones*, ed. G. Cannon, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), ii. 771.

[76] Fowke MS F3, 118. [77] Fowke MS E5, 5.

Francis had no delusions, usually referring to it in a vein of humorous self-denigration. It seems to have occurred to him that in order to get the best out of his new circle of musical friends in England, he would have to start practising rather harder than he had hitherto done.

Intermittent practice was often the downfall of the would-be string player, short periods of work alternating with longer periods of inactivity. An extreme example of irregular practice and of general ineptitude is to be found amongst Francis Fowke's musical acquaintances in London, a cellist named Davenport. His first mistake, in the absence of the restraining hand of a teacher, was to try to tune the cello strings to the pitch of a viola!

[London], n.d. [*c.*1790] R. Davenport to Francis Fowke

> You may tell Cervetto if you see him that altho' I have not practised I do not think I am gone backward. I hired a bass here and it proved the one I first began on without a master, and the tail piece patched on as I did it after it flew in my face in revenge for screwing him an octave too high.[78]

His refusal to countenance the possibility that his lack of practice could have done his playing any harm is very revealing. In another letter, he admits to a *five-year* absence from the instrument, which did not, however, prevent him from casually picking it up to 'show off' to his teacher, one of the leading cellists of the era:

[London], n.d. [*c.*1790] R. Davenport to Francis Fowke

> I met Cervetto the other day and got him to dine with me and took up my bass for the first time almost for 5 years, and shewed off in the 'Child's complaint' etc. I don't know whether I shan't take lessons again.[79]

Cervetto was a much sought-after teacher, but reputation offered no protection in such situations. Teachers were paid to be complimentary, and Cervetto was doubtless happy to oblige for his guinea fee. For a man of very limited talent or with very little time to practise, a cello was perhaps the safest choice of instrument. As Francis acknowledged in a letter to his brother-in-law, John Benn: 'I almost wish you had gone on with the violoncello, just sufficient to have been able to play a very plain bass, and that really would not have required great practice. You have however your cards which are a much more certain and procurable amusement.'[80]

The circle of friends among whom Francis Fowke chose to make music gives an interesting picture of the musical activities of a group of English amateurs around the time of Haydn's first London visit. The composition of his list of musical friends reflects both the wider range of social acquaintances that any Anglo-Indian would expect to make after returning to London, as well as the continuing loyalty to friends from India so characteristic of this group. Prominent in Francis Fowke's circle was Robert Morse, who had been Advocate of the Calcutta Supreme Court. Zoffany's well-known portrait of the Morse and Cator families in India (*c.*1784) depicts him as

[78] Fowke MS E9, 33. [79] Fowke MS E9, 76.
[80] BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/26; 26 June 1789.

a cellist, and he retained this interest back in England. By 1804, he owned at least two instruments:

Clarges Street [London], n.d. [*c.*1804] R. Morse to Francis Fowke

> I wish much to have home my Barrack Norman Bass. If it is at your house, my Servant will bring it, if not I shall be extremely oblig'd to you if you will do me the favor to procure it for me as soon as you can conveniently. I think too it would be as well to disencumber you of the other Bass—not indeed that I have any present occasion for this Instrument, if it is of the smallest use to you. You will order as you please.[81]

A mutual friend, Philip Cipriani, reported Morse's continuing interest, which by 1806 included the building of a new cello by Thomas Dodd.[82]

Perhaps the most noticeable aspect of the circle of musical friends adopted by Francis Fowke in London in the 1790s is the absence of women. It is certainly not the case that he abandoned making music with women. On the contrary, he continued to take great delight in mixed glee singing and in accompanying his sister in her sonatas. However, although its melodic accompanying parts for violin, often little more than 'ad libitum' additions, were well suited to the extreme limitations of the numerous male dilettantes, as a 'mixed' genre, the accompanied sonata was inappropriate for the all-male musical party. By the 1790s, the focus of male amateur musical recreation had become the quartet party, an important musical and social phenomenon. By definition a male genre since women still only rarely played bowed string instruments, the quartet was the all-male instrumental counterpart to the catch club. Its huge success depended upon the availability of at least one good professional violin player. Commonly by this period with a virtuoso first violin part exceeding in difficulty the other three parts, the string quartet provided the perfect setting for the gentleman enthusiast, who could discreetly demonstrate his talent, whilst participating in chamber music of substance. Many a meagre effort on the cello or second violin gained lustre from the brilliance and virtuosity of the professional leader. When Francis Fowke returned from India, he established a pattern of regular quartet parties with musical friends, to which several of the leading string players in London were invited.

The relationship between the professionals and their amateur patrons comes across very clearly in the Fowke correspondence, and there are some new pieces of information concerning the activities and characters of some of the leading London professionals. After his return from India in 1788, Francis decided to engage a violin teacher of quality. His choice was Ignazio Raimondi, who had settled in London in 1780, where his playing was praised by Burney for its 'sweet tone and polished style'. Almost immediately, a tone of easy familiarity is evident in the language used to describe the violinist's circumstances:

Brighton, 14 August 1788 Francis Fowke to Margaret Benn

> Poor Raimondi has a ridiculous distress nearly similar to my own. He says he has only composed one trifling work since he has been in England and he attributes it entirely

[81] Fowke MS F3, 162. [82] Fowke MS E10, 48.

> to his not having been in love. He is too delicate to attach himself to common women and, as a stranger, does not easily find a subject for a more sentimental passion; and he very seriously laments both the vacuity of his heart, genius and purse.[83]

In his next letter Francis expresses great satisfaction with Raimondi's tuition:

[London], October 1788 Francis Fowke to Margaret Benn

> I have Raimondi very often now, and am more and more pleased with him in point of instruction, performance and taste. I think I see some daylight with the violin, tho' certainly there is yet much intense labor to be gone thro'. But I have some things now in such forwardness that, reckoning your return [from Italy] as rather a late one, I hope by that time I shall be able to perform them with that certainty which alone can enable me to play before an audience, even the smallest and most indulgent, with any sort of satisfaction on either side.[84]

The realization that he would need to work hard to achieve any worthwhile level of accomplishment was enough to keep him at his practice. Reading in an obituary of the composer-pianist Johann Samuel Schroeter that he put in eight hours of practice a day, Francis did not know whether this ought 'to make an amateur melancholy or console him with the idea that perseverance, which certainly is in every person's power, will do every thing'.[85] Nonetheless, he stuck to his task, claiming to have 'fagged very hard' since his sister had left. He expressed the hope that he would be able to attain 'a degree of execution that will render it a great amusement to *myself*', but wondered whether it would be to anyone else.[86] One aim of all this practice was to prepare for a quartet party, which Francis hoped soon to establish. The recruitment of professional musicians for private engagements of this kind followed a well-established pattern. The public concert had an important role to play in establishing a musician's credentials, but it was in the world of the private soirée that contacts were made. By the beginning of 1789, Francis Fowke was beginning to experience music-making of a quality well beyond that which was available from the likes of MacArthur in India:

Mount Street [London], 20 February 1789 Francis Fowke to Margaret Benn

> At a private concert the night before last I heard Mr and Mrs Burney play a duet, which was extremely well performed, but the music itself, which was either the Doctor's or his son's, had nothing I thought very striking or original. This is I believe Mr Charles Burney of whom Miss Webb used to speak so much, and he really plays the violin extremely well. He played a second to Salomon in one of Pleyel's *responsive* quartets as well as any of the second fiddles of public performers. I sat by Mrs Burney at supper. She has an understanding in point of cultivation above mediocrity and they both seem to have a real fondness for music with a good and just taste, and their manners are proper and pleasing. I have mentioned all of this because I think you might take them as musical acquaintances. I have been to two of Alderney's and Sunday concerts which are very pleasing. I think Cervetto's performances on the violoncello the most finished

[83] Ormathwaite MS D546/26. [84] Ormathwaite MS D546/26, 49.
[85] Ibid. [86] Ormathwaite MS D546/26.

in point of execution and exquisite in point of taste, I ever heard. His health is very much improved and he plays as usual at the Opera of Hanover Square.[87]

Two of the musicians whom Francis met on this occasion were to become friends. In the light of a growing number of friendships between musicians and their upper-class patrons, the issue was discussed by Vicesimus Knox in his *Personal Nobility: or Letter to a Young Nobleman on the Conduct of his Studies* (London, 1793). In the view of this author, a man of affairs who chose to '*domesticate*' musical performers was demonstrating that he had 'no resources in himself; that letters, science, politics, have no charm for him'.[88] This was to ignore entirely high-status musicians like the well-educated Salomon, who evidently had little difficulty in conducting a 'rational conversation', as a person of 'sense and character'. But the real objection was that time spent in the company of musicians was time spent away from state affairs—'the public happiness—the proper province of a real Nobleman'. For the returned Anglo-Indian with wealth sufficient to sustain the desired life-style and provide for dependants and children, such considerations perhaps carried less weight.

Out of season, especially during the summer months from July to September, when even the most eminent performers were on the look-out for employment, there were ample opportunities to invite musicians to spend long periods in the country. Knox's cautionary tale of a nobleman who filled his mansion during the summer months 'with opera singers, Italian dancers, comic actors, musicians, firework makers, who dine and sup, and sleep for months under his roof', to the detriment of his social life and obligations to the local community was merely an exaggeration of a common phenomenon. The financial basis of these extended visits is unclear. It seems likely that musicians attending an aristocratic household for lengthy periods would have been paid. A bill was submitted to Earl Spencer by the cellist Giacobo Cervetto in 1773 'for the use of my son' (also a cellist) for sixty-two guineas at the rate of a guinea a day.[89] Yet other arrangements were possible. In return for what might now be considered a holiday, during which food and accommodation were provided and access given to country pursuits, musicians might agree to join in music-making with their hosts without fee. In the summer of 1789, Francis entertained Raimondi and Cervetto. Mornings were spent fishing, but there was music-making too:

Roehampton, 20 August 1789 Francis Fowke to Margaret Benn

I have had Cervetto and Raimondi frequently down with me for a week or ten days. Independent of their musical abilities they are both very well behaved and conversible men. They have the strictest friendship for each other and both an extraordinary passion for fishing, so that the Thames or a neighbouring pond affords them amusement the whole morning. When they play it is quite voluntary and consequently con amore, and I am persuaded that Professors of real genius are so heard to much greater advantage than on great concerts where their fame and interest are at stake. What a wonder-

87 Ibid. 88 Leppert, *Music and Image*, 21. 89 BL, Althorpe MS F184.

> ful player is Cervetto! Very difficult music for the tenor or violin he is capable of executing with correctness and at sight on his own instrument, and his taste is certainly exquisite. I do not wonder at the warm commendation given him by Aldernay. To make a drop down to myself, I think I must have expressed myself incautiously in leading you to suppose I 'pleased myself'. I *amuse* myself and so did Sir William Hamilton, my father and many other scrapers. However I am come on a good deal and I am not without hopes in five or six months of playing a decent second, and that will make music a very great source of entertainment to me.[90]

The disparity between a leading professional and a gentleman amateur was such that the practice seems to have grown up of using the music lesson as an excuse to listen to the teacher play. The case was cited of a pupil of several years standing never having been actually heard by his master.[91] The following summer Francis again met Salomon at a private party:

Wimbledon, 21 June 1790 Francis Fowke to Margaret Benn

> But I had for some days been engaged to dine at Clapham at Mrs Davenport's. Salomon was there and Mrs Hodges, wife of the little solemn painter. I don't know whether you ever heard her. She plays very well and preludes in a masterly style. She is daughter of a music-seller and taught before her marriage.[92]

Salomon, however, was not available for a summer engagement with the Fowkes, as he was about to depart for the Continent, to recruit singers and a composer for the 1791 season at the King's Theatre. Once again, it was Raimondi and Cervetto who came:

Wimbledon, 1 July 1790 Francis Fowke to Margaret Benn

> I have my old friends Raimondi and Cervetto with me, and rare fiddling we have. I think I find myself much advanced lately and keep up tolerably well with them, provided it be not some desperate obligato work. I have hopes next winter of receiving my regular guinea in your band, but however I would be content to receive 15 shillings the first winter provided it passed that I was a guinea man and nobody knew anything to the contrary.[93]

Much has been written about the lowly social status of the musician in eighteenth-century English society, but there were signs of change. In the 1780s, the Fowkes had hired and dismissed musicians in Calcutta as mere servants. Now, in the 1790s, they were beginning to treat leading professionals as friends. Once again, a general trend was markedly accentuated for Anglo-Indians by the return to London. Genuine friendship often developed, but the social barriers remained. In November, a potentially awkward situation arose after the birth of a son to Raimondi. Both Francis and Margaret were asked to be godparents:

90 Ormathwaite MS D546/26.

91 N. Zaslaw, 'The Compleat Orchestral Musician', *Early Music*, 7 (1979), 53.

92 Ormathwaite MS D546/26.

93 Ormathwaite MS D546/26.

Wimbledon, 11 November 1790 Francis Fowke to Margaret Benn

> But for this last week I must allow myself the merit of a serious application to business, having had Raimondi and a quartet party with me and almost literally done nothing but fiddle from morning to night. I think playing with players superior to yourself has as good effect in music as in chess and brings me on amazingly. I am extremely ambitious of making a respectable figure in your quartets next winter. I believe I told you of Raimondi's marriage last winter; he has now just got a little boy. I have promised to be the Godfather and he has beg'd of me to ask you to be Godmother. He was not aware that there was some expence attending an office of this kind and when I explained this to him he would have wished to have it understood, if it could be done with propriety, that he meant to satisfy the nurse himself, having, I really believe, no other object than to obtain respectable sponsors for his child, which he thinks may eventually be of some little service to it. Considering the differences of situation, however, I thought this would not be quite proper, but as I found that a couple of guineas would be a fully sufficient present on such an occasion, I have, rather reluctantly, undertaken to ask for your spiritual care of the child. Putting the expence out of the question (for I know you are much poorer than a church mouse) I must say that I think it a charge for which you are perfectly fitted.

Wimbledon, 22 November 1790 Francis Fowke to Margaret Benn

> I told Raimondi that you were angry with me for saying any thing about the price. However I think I did very right. Five guineas is a large sum, and he wanted to have asked us all three (including Benn) being entirely ignorant that it was asking for so much money.[94]

The unease of this response illustrates clearly enough that there were limits to any 'friendship' between a musician and his amateur patron. The social barriers may have been becoming less rigid, but they were still there. Another area of awkwardness, also concerning money, was the precise delineation between activities (such as formal lessons) requiring payment and those (such as extended summer visits) undertaken without remuneration. There was plenty of scope for misunderstanding. Francis had described the playing of his 'old friends' Raimondi and Cervetto as 'quite voluntary and consequently con amore', by which he undoubtedly meant 'for love' as well as 'with love', yet these men were professionals with a living to earn. Certainly a fee was appropriate for formal lessons, even those given during an otherwise unpaid summer visit. A letter from Raimondi to Francis Fowke requesting the settlement of his bill suggests that the subject of money could be an awkward one. Despite the warmth of their relationship, Raimondi couched his request in the formal manner traditional for a paid employee.[95] Failure to pay bills was a widespread complaint. Musicians were just as likely to be affected as tradesmen. There is more than a hint in an earlier letter from his father that Francis was guilty of delaying payments to musicians. However, in this case there was no breach between the two men, and Raimondi continued to teach for the family.

[94] Ormathwaite MS D546/26. [95] Fowke MS E7, 106.

The quartet parties that Francis Fowke was able to arrange by 1792 sometimes included a very impressive musical line-up. One party was reported to his sister as follows:

London, ***c*.1792** Francis Fowke to Margaret Benn

> Davenport and I will be with you early on Saturday morning. We had an excellent batch of music at Clapham—Raimondi, Cervetto, Salomon and Girovitz the composer play'd the tenor, and I chimed in a little wch does me great good. But the best thing was an admirable duet from Raimondi and Cervetto. Girovitz brought some manuscript quartets of his of considerable merit.[96]

The quality of the musical circle which Francis Fowke formed in London was obvious: only five years earlier in India, his playing companions had been Portuguese violinists whose low status was usually matched by their playing ability. Now he could call on some of the most eminent musicians of the age, and his quartet parties included men who were personally acquainted with Haydn and Mozart. This rapid transition from the musical backwater of Benares to the cosmopolitan riches of London concert life represents in microcosm the successful conclusion to an Indian career. It was the prospect of the Anglo-Indian life-style after the return to England which attracted so many to sign on with the East India Company and to endure the discomforts of the experience.

Burney, Hastings, and Haydn

In many plays and novels of the late eighteenth century, India is an important if largely unseen influence on the lives of characters. A long period of absence, an unexpected return, a death overseas, a fortune acquired unexpectedly were all useful 'Indian' clichés for off-stage plot development. In real life, too, one can discern a growing awareness of the presence of India in English cultural affairs. The clearest case is that of portraiture, with a remarkable number of English artists, some very distinguished, opting for periods of work in India. There were few musical connections between Calcutta and London of any significance, but, indirectly at least, India was beginning to influence a growing number of musicians who had never themselves travelled East. Charles Burney is a good example of a prominent musician, initially on the fringes of Anglo-Indian society, but later, through family connections, more heavily involved.

Burney's first known direct contact with India is to be seen in an inventory of 1776, in which he is named as having provided the deceased with a violin: 'A Cremona Fiddle sent out to the deceased by Dr Burney Music Master to the Queen, in a Case.'[97] The 'Treatise' also mentioned in this inventory was probably one or other of the two volumes of *Travels*, published in London in 1771 and 1773. Burney had achieved his doctorate in 1770, and in 1774 he was promoted to the rank of

[96] Ormathwaite MS D546/26, 155.

[97] BL, OIOC, Bengal Inventories, 1774–6, P155/4.

musician-in-ordinary at Court. The academic qualification was thus correctly noted, even if the royal appointment was overstated. That he had many Indian contacts already is further demonstrated by the subscription list to the first volume of his *General History of Music*, published on 31 January 1776. The 'Hon. Warren Hastings, Governor General of Bengal' put himself down for three copies. The President, Secretary, and four members of the Council of Calcutta ordered in total twelve copies, and there were other subscriptions from Madras.[98] An advertisement in the *India Gazette* on 21 November 1785 invited subscribers to 'Dr Burney's History of Music' to send to Old Council House for the second volume, which had been published in 1782. A formal connection between Burney and his most eminent Anglo-Indian subscriber was established in February 1786, when Clement Francis, a surgeon, who had acted as secretary to Warren Hastings, married Charlotte Burney. According to Fanny Burney, Francis had been so charmed by her novel *Evelina* in India that he had returned to England determined to marry its author. For reasons unknown, he had ended up with her youngest sister.[99] Even after the death of Clement Francis, Burney remained a supporter of Hastings. When the celebrated trial was over, he personally congratulated him: 'And so Dear Mr Hastings is honourably acquitted; and I visited him next morning, and we cordially shook hands.'[100] Once established, the Indian connection persisted, and the next generation provided a recruit for the Indian army, 'Bengal Dick', as he was known to the family.

These specifically Indian connections were only part of a wider pattern. James Burney, who later rose to the rank of rear-admiral, sailed round the world twice with Captain Cook. Captain Phillips, who married Susan Burney, also sailed to the South Seas. Although ethnography was never a central part of Burney's scholarly endeavour, all these connections served at least to stimulate some curiosity. In his correspondence and published writings may be found comments on some Chinese instruments sent to London. Among these was a *ching*. Quite properly, Burney noted that the absence of players would hamper serious investigation of the properties of the instrument. It had, moreover, been damaged: 'The instrument rec[d] some damage from the length of the Voyage & Dampness of the place where they were stored on Ship-Board; but I hope to get them repaired & to find out the Scales of some of them.'[101]

Among the large communities of Italian and German musicians who worked in late eighteenth-century London, there were some who took an interest in India. Leopold Mozart, perhaps as a result of his concert at Lady Clive's house, kept himself informed about Indian affairs. In a letter of 9 July, he reported news of the defeat of Shah Alam at the Battle of Baksar: 'by the way, some very welcome news has just arrived here: that on 23 October 1764 the troops of the king and the [East] India Company won a total victory over the King of Indostan and his vizier: 50,000 men

[98] P. Scholes, *The Great Dr. Burney: His Life, his Travels, his Works, his Family and his Friends* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), i. 293.

[99] Ibid. ii. 239. [100] Ibid. ii. 102.

[101] *The Letters of Charles Burney*, vol. i: *1751–1784*, ed. A. Ribeiro (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 235.

in total.'[102] Haydn's connections with India have been the subject of recent research.[103] Not having seen the sea until he travelled to England in 1790, his fascination with ships is understandable. According to his London Notebook, he actually went on board one of the Company's ships: 'In the month of August [1791] I lunched at noon on an East India merchantman with 6 cannon. I was given a magnificent meal.'[104] The basis of the belief that, while in England, Haydn heard about the success of his music in Calcutta is a statement by his early biographer Giuseppe Carpani to the effect that the composer's music was known world-wide, 'from Mexico to Calcutta, as from Naples to London, from Pera to Paris'. Stendhal, too, mentions that Haydn's symphonies were being performed in India just two years after their composition. By 1790, Haydn's music was indeed being regularly imported into India, and symphonies were from time to time performed in public subscription concerts. The programme for the Fifth Concert in the subscription series run by Bird in 1789 included: 'Sinfonia, the Celebrated one of La Chasse, by Hayden'.[105] Assuming that this was played from Forster's edition of *c.*1783, '*The Celebrated La Chasse in all its parts*', the time delay in this case was eight years after composition, and six years after London publication. But Stendhal's report of a mere two-year delay could well have been entirely accurate. The speed of Calcutta's reception of new London repertoire has been evident throughout this study, and with the journey to India taking no more than six months, the bulk of Stendhal's two-year transmission period could have been the time that elapsed between composition and London publication. The subjects of discussion during Haydn's experience of lavish East India Company hospitality in 1791 are of course unknown, but by then, there would have been numerous affluent members of the Anglo-Indian community in London, many, like the Fowkes, with a passionate interest in music, who would have taken delight in informing the great man of his successes in distant India.

Burney may have played some role in stimulating Haydn's interests in India, and it seems likely that the composer attended one of the sessions of the Hastings trial. He wrote:

> Hastings' trial which took place last week on 25th May 1792 was the ninety-second meeting in Westminster Hall. Hasting [*sic*] has 3 advocates all to himself. Each of them gets 10 guinees on the day of the meeting. This trial began 4 years ago. It is said that Hasting has a fortune of a million pound Sterling.[106]

One final piece of evidence of Haydn's connections with the Anglo-Indian community comes in a list of his possessions, which includes a German translation of Sir William Jones's work on Indian music: 'Dalberg. [Item] 23. Über die Musik der

[102] I. Woodfield, 'New Light on the Mozarts' London Visit: A Private Concert with Manzuoli', *Music & Letters*, 76 (1995), 206.

[103] T. Tolley, 'Music in the Circle of Sir William Jones: A Contribution to the History of Haydn's Early Reputation', *Music & Letters*, 73 (1992), 525–50.

[104] H. Robins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*: vol. v: *Haydn in England 1791–1795* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1976), 95.

[105] I. Woodfield, 'Haydn Symphonies in Calcutta', *Music & Letters*, 75 (1994), 141.

[106] Landon, *Haydn in England*, 168.

Indien. Eine Abhandlungen des Sir William Jones aus dem Englischen übersetzt, mit erlaüternden Anmerkungen und zusätzen beleitet 2 Band.' Essler, the author of this list, also noted a dedication. It has been suggested that Haydn was presented with this work soon after its publication in 1802. There is no evidence that the composer ever had the slightest interest in Indian music, the subject of the discourse by Jones, but a possible context for the gift may be seen in his involvement in making arrangements of folksongs from Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. The 'Hindostannie' air, admittedly not the subject of Jones's book, was an analogous genre. On a more personal level, the gift may well have been intended to remind Haydn of pleasant days spent in London.

The Next Generation: An Early Nineteenth-Century Musical Education

As the new century dawned, both Margaret and Francis Fowke had young sons and daughters whose musical education was about to begin. Their approach demonstrates what a remarkably powerful force for conservatism the family unit could be as techniques, attitudes, and values were passed down from one generation to the next. Much of what they had learnt from their father, a man who had heard Handel play, Margaret and Francis were now seeking to impart to their own children, who would reach maturity in the Age of Mendelssohn. This deeply entrenched conservatism affected many aspects of musical study, but there were exceptions, notably repertoire and instrument purchase, for which fashionability remained the key criterion. There was an obvious tension here. It must have been far from clear to the young Fowke girls why, when their public goal was the pleasing rendition of Bianchi's Italian canzonets or Dussek's brilliant piano sonatas, so much private attention needed to be paid to the study of figured bass. The divergence between pedagogical and fashionable repertoire, long a feature of English musical education, is already clear. Continuity between the generations is a notable feature of eighteenth-century musical families, both professional and amateur, and the same is true of families whose members followed careers in India. In the case of the Fowkes, this conjunction of interests reinforced a powerful respect for tradition.

The other notable aspect of the musical education of the young Fowkes was the extent to which their parents exercised detailed control over it; there was no question of merely leaving it to the teachers. Progress was discussed in considerable detail, and only when the Napoleonic Wars began to cast a long shadow over the family was correspondence on musical matters superseded by anxieties over the outcome of the conflict. Francis Fowke's daughter Mary and Margaret's daughter Elizabeth both took up the pianoforte shortly after 1800. Margaret herself undertook to start her daughter off, but she was clearly irked by the more routine aspects of the task, which she thought better suited to a governess. She wrote to her brother, outlining her views as to what qualities a musical governess ought to possess:

Margate, 6 September 1803 Margaret Walsh to Francis Fowke

> I don't know what kind of a musician Miss K is, but I think it would be a most useful knowledge for her to acquire were she to make herself perfectly mistress of the rudiments of Pforte playing—that is, the fingering (or rather thumbing) of all the keys major and minor, the manner of fingering broken chords and other common passages; to know by heart the flats and sharps belonging to each key major and minor, and some little, this very general, idea of the principles of modulation. A Governess thus informed would most powerfully second the instruction of a good master, and would most probably be of more use to the pupil than if she were even a passable proficient herself. I feel the want of an assistant of this kind myself and I am therefore obliged to go thro' this drudgery, but it cannot possibly be done by any other person so well as by the Governess, who is never absent at the time of practice. It has however compelled me to rub up all my Pforte knowledge and even to add to my former stock.[107]

This is very revealing of the still lowly status of the governess as music teacher. Margaret's rather contemptuous view, that such a woman need have little skill as a performer, is a clear enough indication of her subordinate position; sufficient for her to be a 'passable proficient', when all that was required was the drudgery of supervising daily practice. Technical matters such as fingering would come within her sphere of competence, but not the development of style. The ability to demonstrate this in ornamentation or in improvised cadential modulations was the domain of the specialist teacher. In such circumstances, it is easy to understand the debilitating lack of motivation felt by many governesses, whose young pupils showed no interest in or aptitude for music, but who had to be taught for social reasons.

In the music-loving Fowke households, the decision to employ a professional music teacher for their children was taken at an early stage. Like so many Anglo-Indian families, the Fowkes had returned to England in a very sound financial position. With their social status and income, they were certainly in a position to hire musicians of quality to teach their children. With residences in London and the Home Counties, it was natural for the family to look to the great pool of talent in the capital city. They moved with ease among a wide circle of respected London musicians, counting Salomon and Raimondi and Cervetto as friends. In choosing a teacher for their children, the Fowkes were thus able to take advantage of the personal recommendation of musicians of real calibre. Of his daughter's first music teacher Girolamo Masi, Francis Fowke quoted with somewhat uncritical pride Salomon's opinion that he was 'superior to Clementi'.[108] Masi had taught Margaret Fowke in Rome during her Grand Tour in 1789. Now, like so many of his compatriots having ended up in London, he was in a good position to offer his services to her niece.

In time, Masi was succeeded by another Italian, Francesco Bianchi, an important opera composer and a very popular teacher of the Italian vocal style. His relationship with the family was as much that of friend as that of paid employee. When his daughter died in 1807, the family were greatly shocked. Elizabeth Walsh wrote:

[107] BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/27. [108] Ibid.

'[We] are truly sorry for the loss of Bianchi's sweet little girl. She seemed an intelligent affectionate child. I hope he will sustain the loss with fortitude.' Her mother added: 'I cannot tell you how forcibly his bitter misfortune has struck my mind. There is a goodness and benevolence in his manner which interest . . . while his affliction is such that it would excite pity even for a bad man.'[109] Two letters from him survive in the Fowke correspondence relating to the arrangement of piano lessons. In the first, he promises a visit as soon as he is able, and comments with pleasure that his young pupil 'is studying music in the country with great attention and love'.[110] Lessons were arranged in advance by letter. As a friend, Bianchi was usually invited to spend a whole day with the family, to eat with them and to join in their recreations.[111] In London, extended visits by musicians are a clear sign of a good personal relationship, while deep in the country, an overnight stay by the music teacher was often a necessity. In 1799, Lady Clive's daughter's music teacher came from Hereford to Oakley Park once a fortnight, giving 'a lesson the morning next after his arrival as well as one the moment he comes'.[112] Francis Fowke found Bianchi's approach wholly congenial, but the musician's suicide, which shocked the musical world in 1810, necessitated the recruitment of a new teacher. Again the choice was made as a result of the personal recommendation of an eminent musician friend:

Hertford Street, 27 March 1811 Francis Fowke to Margaret Walsh

> Mary has a great loss in poor Bianchi; he really taught her *con amore*. His lessons were measured by her improvements, and never by his watch. He really was one of the most liberal disinterested men I ever met with. I suppose you have heard the manner of his melancholy death. It quite takes, for a time at least, from the pleasure of hearing his delightful music, to think that a man of the first enthusiasm [who c]ould inspire such enchanting melodies and compositions should be reduced to the anguish of mind that must precede such an act! We have now got Gretorex. He was much recommended to me by Cervetto, and I am perfectly satisfied with him. He has studied formerly in Italy. His stile in Italian music is in my opinion very pure, graceful and elegant—not at all inferior to his acknowledged excellence in the sacred stile. Tho' he has as many scholars as he can possibly attend, he is not quite so extravagant in his demands as some of them—half a guinea for 40 minutes. He gives Mary a liberal allowance of time, which of course, must be taken from somebody else, and this I consider as one of the best compliments he could pay her. She is laboring hard and making up for lost time by the sea, and is indeed making rapid advances both in singing and accompaniment. However her time at Worthing was not wholly lost—she practised constantly. Tho' a good master is always a great help, yet she had a musical education so thoroughly professional that her progress by her own efforts alone was far from inconsiderable.[113]

Value for money is noted an important consideration, but the deciding factor seems to have been the musician's credentials in the Italian style. Thomas Greatorex was

[109] BL, OIOC, Fowke MS E10, 58.
[110] Fowke MS F3, 187; 22 May 1809.
[111] Fowke MS F3, 188; 16 Oct. 1809.
[112] BL, OIOC, Photo Eur 287; 1 Nov. 1799.
[113] Ormathwaite MS D546/28.

one of the few English-born teachers to be employed by the Fowke family in London. His was a generation of musicians, who still had to combat the indefinable aura of superior musicality, which clung to rivals from south of the Alps, and latterly from Germany too. The anonymous author of *A Set of Easy Lessons for the Harpsichord* explained in his preface the reason for the concealment of his name, referring to a prejudice that proved exceptionally hard to eradicate: 'He begs Leave to inform you that Prudence absolutely forbids him to discover himself at all. For, should he be an Italian, the German Masters will oppose him; should he be a German, the Italians will combine against him; but should he ever be suspected to be an Englishman, Italians, Germans, nay Englishmen themselves, will attack him on all sides at once, and Fashion with her Votaries (most of the People of Fashion) join their Forces to run him down.' Greatorex, however, doubtless thanks to his three years studying in Italy, was making a good living out of teaching. With careful business acumen, he implied that the new pupil was to be squeezed into his already tight schedule as a particular favour to the parents. By the time that Elizabeth was a teenager, she was being attended by a trio of eminent music instructors: Cramer for pianoforte; Greatorex for singing and thoroughbass; and Madame du Fresnay for harp.[114] Hannah More complained about this tendency to employ multiple teachers, writing that a young lady now seemed to require not just 'one able instructor' but 'a whole band'.[115]

In overseeing the musical progress of their children during the first years of their studies, Margaret and Francis paid careful attention not only to what the teachers were doing, but also to the published manuals that were being used. Several of the treatises that the Fowke children followed are mentioned by name, and this provides a rare opportunity to examine the manner in which published instruction books were used. Early indications of the progress of the young Fowke girls come in 1802. Francis writes in the main about general matters, repeating maxims dimly remembered from his own childhood, or picked up from published works—good advice, passed unquestioningly on. He sends 'a little lesson' to his niece Elizabeth: 'If we can once get her to *name* her notes readily, you cannot conceive how great an advance is made in the art.'[116] This picks up the language of Clementi: 'Let the Pupil FIRST be familiarized with the notes, by READILY naming them; and then find them out as READILY on the instrument.'[117] Later in the year, he expresses satisfaction that singing is to be reckoned amongst his daughter's pleasures, but confesses that the pianoforte 'is still a heavy and irksome task'.[118] Regularity of practice was of great importance, and was clearly regarded by Francis as the Golden Rule for beginners. The motto which he quotes to his sister on the subject,[119] comes from 'The Author's Address to the Learners' in Pasquali's tutor: 'It was the Advice of a noted Painter to his Pupils, *Nulla dies sine linea*: The like Advice I beg leave to address to you; *Let no*

[114] NLW, Aberystwyth, Ormathwaite MS FG2/1.
[115] Leppert, *Music and Image*, 58.
[116] BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/27; 22 Apr. 1802.
[117] *Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Piano Forte* (London, 1801).
[118] Ormathwaite MS D546/27; 13 Nov. 1802.
[119] Ormathwaite MS D546/26, 49.

Day pass without some Practice.'[120] Francis junior, lacking nothing in nerve given the irregularity of his own practice, wrote from Eton expressing similar sentiments: 'It gives me much pleasure in hearing of Mary's progress in music. I consider she has too much good sense not to perceive that a little *regular* practice is far preferable to two or three hours by *fits and starts.*'[121]

The initial goal was to learn to read music fluently. Francis argued against playing by ear:

Hertford Street, 16 July 1803 Francis Fowke to Margaret Walsh

> Indeed you may have observed the same thing in those that learn to *play* by ear; what they *do* know they execute with great neatness, but it is a severe task to them to acquire any thing new particularly by the notes, and as for learning to read music *readily* I believe it is what they never do.[122]

As might be expected, published tutors came down firmly against playing only by ear. Broderip, for example, stated it as a principal object that a young student should learn to play 'entirely by Note' since 'the Memory and Ear are both liable to deception'. Sight-reading was also then possible: 'When the Student has acquired a tolerable execution, it would not be amiss to play daily, a variety of Compositions in order to gain a facility in reading Music, or, as it is generally termed, playing at sight'.[123] Ability to read at sight was seen as a significant proof of musicianship; it was something for the fond parent to take pride in:

Oakley Park, 22 January 1803 Margaret Clive to Margaret Maskelyne

> My dearest girl, tell me how you feel in regard to music? We all much wish you to go on, if happily, in the acquisition of that delightful science. And remember what good Mr Coyle said: 'she *knows* music'. By 'knowing' he meant you understood the value of notes etc; for you played what you had not seen before, [and in] a manner as was convincing.[124]

In the summer of 1803, Francis felt moved to write to Margaret with detailed advice about how his niece could improve her piano-playing, in particular about the importance of correct fingering:

Hertford Street, 16 July 1803 Francis Fowke to Margaret Walsh

> I am glad to hear that she [Elizabeth] goes on with her music; it is a great point gained if she can be brought to apply properly to one thing. You should lead her to the fundamental part, both as a habit and as that which will have the most lasting effect on her play—what I mean is: acquiring a good shake; holding the hand in a proper position; and knowing her thumb notes in *every* key. This will save her many a tumble on her nose by and by when she has to travel at sight (or nearly so) thro' some of those paths, which Haydn and his countrymen have strew'd thick with the thorns of flats and

[120] *Thorough-Bass made Easy* (Edinburgh, 1757).
[121] Fowke MS C3, 7.
[122] Ormathwaite MS D546/27.
[123] R. Broderip, *Plain and Easy Instructions for Young Performers on the Piano Forte or Harpsichord* (London, *c.*1788).
[124] BL, OIOC, Photo Eur 287; 22 Jan. 1803.

> sharps. I would advise you to write out the sample in octave in each of the major keys, treble and bass, and make her with a pencil put on a cross over the thumb notes. These may be rubbed out again and this lesson repeated till she is perfect in them. You may then make her mark the thumb notes and also where the third finger crosses over instead of the 2ᵈ, because it is missing this that most commonly puts the learner out. When she is perfect in the major keys, she may proceed in the same way with the minor, but these it will be better to write out with the octave up and down on account of the difference of the ascending and descending scale.[125]

Francis and Margaret Fowke belonged to the first generation of English musicians who could pass on to their children the modern fingering system that they had acquired for themselves from Pasquali's tutor. This stated that 'the right management of the thumb' was needed to effect 'a proper manner of shifting the hand higher or lower'.[126] The system was rapidly and widely adopted in England (and thus in India too). Pasquali's tutor and others of the period such as Johann Caspar Heck's *The Art of Fingering* retained their status as classics, and were still being recommended to their children by the Fowkes in the early nineteenth century, along with the more up-to-date method by Clementi.[127] The system of notation mentioned by Francis Fowke was of course English-style, with the thumb being represented by a cross (+) and the remaining fingers by 1, 2, 3, and 4.

The Fowkes were rarely content for their children to use even a hallowed tutor without interpretation, and it was usually their practice to copy out or adapt exercises in an attempt to clarify them or extend their application. In September 1803, Margaret compiled a version of Clementi's fingering method for her daughter which she hoped would be 'plainer and more easily retained than any I have met with'. Although she had 'newly arranged the rules', she claimed that she had not deviated from 'Clementi's practice'.[128] The habit of rearranging material from published tutors was deeply ingrained with the Fowkes, doubtless because so many tutors were incomplete or otherwise inadequate. Clementi, however, is a model of accuracy and his book explains fingering systematically (Ex. 7). It is hard to see how Margaret could have improved on this, but her need to try to do so is rather telling.

The following year, during a period away from her daughter, Margaret wrote with instructions about how she was to practise:

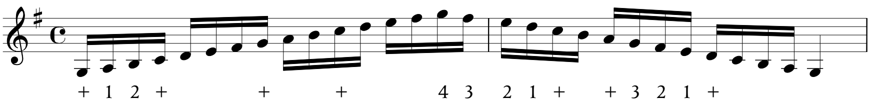
21 May 1804 — Margaret Walsh to Elizabeth Walsh

> Be very attentive to your Music. Practise constantly, and never *play the whole piece*, till you have attacked the difficult passages. Be equally attentive to your *very short* lessons, which surely should be performed with the greatest precision and alacrity, by a girl in her 11ᵗʰ year.[129]

A peremptory request on the subject of fingering scales followed, requiring an immediate response in writing:

[125] Ormathwaite MS D546/27.
[126] N. Pasquali, *The Art of Fingering the Harpsichord* (Edinburgh, 1758).
[127] J. C. Heck, *The Art of Fingering* (London, *c.*1766; 2nd edn. *c.*1782).
[128] Ormathwaite MS D546/27.
[129] NLW, Aberystwyth, Ormathwaite MS G1; 21 May 1804.

Ex. 7. The fingering of a G major scale (M. Clementi, *Introduction to the Art of Playing the Piano Forte*, London, 1801)



Upper Harley Street, n.d. (1807) Margaret Walsh to Elizabeth Walsh

> Inform me by return of post what are the thumb notes for the right hand, when the key note is on a white key; what are the thumb notes for the left hand, and if there are any exceptions to this rule; if there are, in what keys do the exceptions take place. Refer to Mary's rules.[130]

Elizabeth's response to this is not recorded, but she was evidently still being hounded when on 9 June 1810 she wrote with some exasperation: 'Tell Mama I practise very hard, the piece I have to learn has a g^t deal of Scale in it, & is very difficult, the Piano is but an indifferent one, I think we had better have our own up.'[131]

Given her own long struggle to master the subject, it is hardly surprising that Margaret should have sought to explain to her daughter the theory of modulation. She decided to form for her use 'a slight introduction', but the subject baffled her still, and she quickly had to resort to her brother with a lengthy series of questions, several of which reveal the gaps in her knowledge:

Warfield, 12 November 1807 Margaret Walsh to Francis Fowke

> Question 2nd: This 6/5 upon the *sharp* 4th is nothing more *in the treble* than the usual preparation for the succeeding key G; that is to say it is the 7th to the 5th to G. I therefore conclude that the reason you had for saying the 6/5 on the 4th in preference to the 7th on D is that you thought F sharp more harmonious in the bass than D natural. Am I right?
>
> Question the 3rd: You say the 6/5 upon the 4th is *an Inversion* of the 7th of the 2nd. I do not think my ideas are sufficiently distinct on the term *Inversion* to form a definition of it. Will you favor me with one, illustrated by an example?[132]

After a lifetime of musical study, the concept of inversion eluded her still, and she struggled to understand the relationship between a II^7 and a IIb^7. She also had to resort to Francis for a series of minor key illustrations of modulations to match those in major keys given in Heck. Francis replied in detail to all his sister's questions and promised to make 'as pleasing a circle as I can in the minor'.[133] This is what he had to say about inversion:

The chord of a note is itself, its third, and its fifth, always counting upwards & counting the note itself for one—thus the chord of C consists of C, E & G. If C is in the Bass & E or G above it, then this C is called Fundamental, but if E or G are thrown into the Bass preserving the harmony of C in the upper parts, then it is called an Inversion. These inverted chords are

130 Ibid. 131 Ibid. 132 Fowke MS E10, 123.
133 BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/28.

sometimes called Derived Chords, perhaps with more propriety of distinction, the fundamental chord being considered as the Principal from w^{ch} the others are derived.[134]

With so sketchy a knowledge of basic harmonic procedure, it is no wonder that she struggled with the improvised cadenza, and it is hard to see how she could have failed to confuse irredeemably her own daughter.

The continuing status of the discipline of thoroughbass in early nineteenth-century England is well documented. A. F. C. Kollman's *A Practical Guide to Thorough-Bass* (1801) was successful enough to warrant the appearance of *A Second Practical Guide to Thorough-Bass* (1807). Francis Fowke insisted that his daughter acquire some fluency in the art, although in the following passage from his letter of 21 June 1804, one senses in a series of underlined words (here given in italics) more than a little reluctance on the part of the pupil:

Hertford Street, 21 June 1804 Francis Fowke to Margaret Walsh

Mary is now reaping the fruits of her musical studies. She is able to pick out with no great trouble the accompanyment of any easy canzonets, and the song part she is, of course, able to read. It is already almost an amusement to her and in the course of a few months will be completely so. She has got a very pretty one with an arpeggio accompaniment which she has been taking the more pains with on the idea that she shall please you with it . . . She goes on *pretty* well with her thoro' bass, but it makes her groan a little sometimes—*you* know what a dry study this is. I hand her over the difficulties as well as I can but I shall *make* her acquire it *perfectly* and at Margate, where I think I shall go very shortly, we shall have a good deal of leisure for it. She has got rid of the pain in her chest, but we sing with a good deal of moderation, filling up the time with equal advantage, by the thoro' bass.[135]

The background to the survival of thoroughbass in the curriculum of English keyboard players lies of course in the revival of 'ancient' music. The only completely committed advocate of old music in the Fowke family was Joseph. For his children, the triumvirate of the English canonical masters, Purcell, Corelli, and Handel, were, after their father's death, increasingly figures whose music deserved respect rather than actual performance. Yet the techniques of the older repertoire were taught assiduously to the next generation, and so indeed was the music in pedagogic works. The list of repertoire in Clementi's tutor points unequivocally to the status of old music in a keyboard education:

Corelli	11	J. S. Bach	1
Handel	10	C. P. E. Bach	1
Mozart	5	Paradies	1
Scarlatti	4	Cramer	1
Couperin	3	Dussek	1
Haydn	3	Beethoven	1
Pleyel	3	[song arrangements	4]
Rameau	1		

134 BL, OIOC, Ormathwaite MS D546/28.

135 Ormathwaite MS D546/27.

Corelli and Handel are dominant; the long and not always happy association of English keyboard education with Scarlatti and Couperin has begun; the status of Haydn, Pleyel, and Mozart is acknowledged; Beethoven and J. S. Bach each make a brief appearance; but many popular favourites of the 1790s are ignored. This, however, was primarily material for study. The Fowke women pianists performed a very different repertoire in public.

The educational justification for so great an emphasis on a repertoire that would soon be a century old was by no means limited to its inherent merits. 'Ancient' music was increasingly portrayed as the fount of all true style. A useful analogy was the influence of Greek and Roman authors on all subsequent writers. As Francis Fowke wrote to his son at Eton:

> It is often asked what are the advantages of learning Greek and Latin . . . the authors in these languages are the great models upon which all authors since have formed themselves—in studying them the taste is formed and the judgement matured—you see and know at once what the moderns have borrowed from them and what little they have to the claim of originality. The Ancients are in literature what Corelli is in music—a composer or even player would not probably acquire a good taste unless he began with Corelli and studied him carefully.[136]

Serious students of Clementi's *Introduction* would not be expected to play large amounts of Corelli in public. Only by studying old masters, however, could their repertoire of contemporary sonatas by Dussek and others acquire the necessary taste. It was and remains a debatable point.

The role of pedagogical works in promoting 'ancient' music with its associated techniques is clear enough. In the case of attitudes to musical performance, traditional values were often transmitted orally. With the Fowkes, steadiness of play was considered a highly desirable attribute of performance, which was passed down from one generation to the next. Thirty years earlier Joseph Fowke had written to his son several times on this topic, a favourite hobby-horse. He had deplored the fact that even in his own lifetime Handel had been 'continually mortified by the want of steadiness and firmness in the performers, who were, even then, prone to run riot in the time'.[137] In a passage strikingly reminiscent of the paternal credo, Francis writes approvingly of the evidence of this quality in Elizabeth's play:

Tunbridge Wells, 1 August 1805 Francis Fowke to Margaret Walsh

> I rejoice in Elizabeth's proficiency in Ferrari. Indeed I observed with great pleasure when I heard her, the steadiness with which she play'd. It is certainly one of the greatest excellencies in the pianoforte, and what is seldom attained even by those who bestow immense time on the instrument and arrive at great execution. Even the masters I think do not play so steadily in time as those on other instruments, except those who have grounded in the organ stile.[138]

[136] Fowke MS D13, 7; 17 Mar. 1801.

[137] Fowke MS E5, 53; 15 Nov. 1784.

[138] Ormathwaite MS D546/27.

A fundamental musical value, hallowed by family tradition, was thus passed down, and an attitude to performance, rightly or wrongly believed to go back to Handel himself, was seen as still relevant in the performance of the brilliant virtuoso repertoire of the London piano school. In a society in which musical taste was subject to the demands of fashionable novelty this was a musical family who took pride in preserving some of their most deeply held values. Dussek or Clementi in a staid and steady 'organ stile' was a contradiction that went unresolved.

For a young girl, singing and keyboard-playing were equally valid fields in which to demonstrate musical accomplishment, and both were studied as a matter of routine. The Fowkes, who had the resources to pay for a musical education of good quality, were able to opt for separate keyboard and vocal tutors. Thus Girolamo Masi, Mary Fowke's keyboard tutor, was joined by Ferdinando Mazzante, a singing teacher. Francis wrote to his son at Eton about the appointment: 'Mary has learnt to name all her seven cliffs pretty well and next week Mazzanti comes to teach her, which I am very glad of, for she requires a strict master.'[139] The view that a complete beginner ought to become familiar with seven clefs was fairly widespread, and it reflected the continuing desire to perform old music. Dussek recommends the student to learn all seven (bass, baritone, tenor, alto, mezzo soprano, soprano, and treble), but others such as Clementi thought five (bass, tenor, countertenor [alto], soprano, and treble), sufficient.[140] The reason for learning the C clefs was, as Broderip pointed out, that 'the student may sometimes practice old Music in which the C cliffs often occur'. Soon, Francis was writing with pleasure at the good start made by Mary:

Hertford Street, 25 March 1801 Francis Fowke to Francis junior

> I have not a great deal of news to tell you—but I have the pleasure to say that Mazzanti is much pleased with Mary, and you may thus be sure that she is going on well. She has both a juster ear and a better voice than I expected. With the instrument her voice sounds respectable and she catches the tones and even half tones very well. She does the scale of semitones ascending and descending with very few mistakes and corrects herself very soon with the assistance of the Pforte. You know Mazzanti had not to teach her from the beginning for we had taken great pains to make her name her notes which she now does pretty quick.[141]

Prior to starting with this teacher, Mary had obviously been given instruction in the rudiments by a family member or a governess. Practice was done at the pianoforte where mistakes could be rectified. The following year, Francis wrote to Margaret to express warm approval of the method being used by the singing teacher:

Hertford Street, 22 April 1802 Francis Fowke to Margaret Walsh

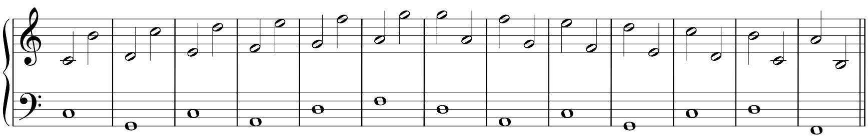
> I am every day more and more convinced of the excellence of Mazzante's method in the rapid progress that Mary makes. It is, I think, one of the consequences of learning

[139] Fowke MS D13, 5; 27 Feb. 1801.

[140] *Instructions on the Art of Playing the Piano Forte or Harpsichord* (London, 1796).

[141] Fowke MS D13, 8.

Ex. 8. An exercise to practise the seventh (F. Mazzanti, *Vocal Exercizes, or the Most Simple Method of Acquiring a Perfect Intonation*, London, *c.*1805)



> any thing on good principles that the first advances are slow, but when the foundation is once laid, the work goes on with great rapidity—every thing each day *got* is a real gain. I have no doubt but in a twelvemonth's time she will sing *perfectly* well at sight, and I should not be surprised if she had nearly made that acquirement in the course of six months.[142]

The method being used by Mary can be identified as Mazzanti's *Vocal Excercizes.*[143] Solmization is proposed as the key to sight-reading. Given the warmth of Francis Fowke's recommendation, it comes as something of a shock to discover what a paltry effort the published work is. Mazzante begins with the diatonic scale of C major 'assending' and descending, with the usual solmization syllables. A bass is added to enable the pupil to sing with accompaniment. Then follows a series of exercises on intervals up to and including the octave. These are full of obvious errors and inconsistencies. The proposed harmonization of the exercise of the seventh is bizarre indeed (Ex. 8). Finally, there is the chromatic scale mentioned by Francis. The method is flimsy and gives the impression of having been flung together with a minimum of thought. Francis Fowke's opinion of Mazzante as a teacher doubtless owed far more to his public reputation and his personal dealings with the family than to any critique of the published material.

The following year Francis began to take an interest in the vocal education of his niece Elizabeth:

Hertford Street, 16 July 1803 Francis Fowke to Margaret Walsh

> I wish I could persuade you to teach her [Elizabeth] *readily* to name her notes by the names of do. re. etc. This simple process is the instrument that the voice works with, and acquires by it a power of executing at sight equal to many instruments. But those who do not begin with solfa-ing but are allowed to sing by ear seldom have patience to acquire the right mode . . . I suppose you are inquiring after new music for Miss K. Mazzante has published 6 canzonets. They are very easy and consequently very simple, but I think they are pleasing melodies. Not to mistake this set, they are printed by Kelly. The first is in F—*Donne* [ed] *Amore.* Perhaps she has got them. If you do not find them in the shops, I will send you a copy.[144]

An issue much in his mind was whether the possession of a good voice was necessary to serious vocal study. In trying to persuade his sister to continue with her

[142] Ormathwaite MS D546/27.

[143] Mazzantti, *Vocal Excercizes, or the Most Simple Method of Acquiring a Perfect Intonation, being an Epitome of the Art of Solmisation, as now Taught by the Best Italian Masters* (London, *c.*1805).

[144] Ormathwaite MS D546/27.

daughter's vocal education throughout her early years, he argued the case that work could overcome the shortcomings of nature:

Hertford Street, 21 June 1804 Francis Fowke to Margaret Walsh

> I want to persuade you to lay an early foundation for Elizabeth's vocal education in music. I think she has a very good voice from nature and a good ear. Had she even less voice I should recommend to you to cultivate it diligently, being persuaded that much may be done by cultivation where Nature has not set her face particularly against it. Think what a present you will make her and how readily you would yourself have exchanged for it all your instrumental skill! The irksome part of rudiments and principles must be got over in our childhood, or (with the exception of those urged by that enthusiastic order which even at an advanced time overcomes all difficulties) few are well provided in any science or art that do not [unclear] to those who have charge of their education. I would have you use all your influence with Elizabeth to name her *do. re.* with readiness and *dodging* and then next winter she may begin with Bianchi; and if you tell him that you mean to learn *scientifically*, and are not at all in a hurry to hear her come out in a song, he will take care to ground her properly. Really the masters are not always in fault for teaching superficially. Many parents would not only be impatient to hear the effects of the lessons in an actual *song*, but would be apt to think and say that the master, in keeping back his pupil, had the dishonest view of prolonging his own gain.[145]

As committed musicians, the Fowkes appreciated that the musical education of their children was a long-term undertaking. For them, a thorough grounding was of much greater value than quick and facile results. Francis clearly believed the opposite point of view to be commonplace. With justice or not, the suspicion was obviously widespread that some music teachers were guilty of deliberately retarding progress in their pupils in order to keep themselves for longer in position.

Three years later Francis wrote with pleasure at reports of Elizabeth's singing, but he reiterated his advice on solmization, hoping that she had not 'forgotten the do-re'.[146] The high esteem in which Italian singing teachers were held is very obvious throughout the period. The Fowke family usually opted for one in preference to an Englishman. It was widely accepted that there was a particular Italian *style* in singing, different from the English, and, in both musical and social prestige, much superior to the latter. Lady Clive, writing to Margaret Maskelyne on 22 March 1801, would not countenance a girl leaving the country without it: 'But our country music master Mr Coyle of Hereford attends these girls who please me much by their evening playing and reading; yet I would have them try to learn a little of the Italian manner of singing before they go abroad.'[147]

The preferred instrument of three generations of Fowke men was of course the violin, as unequivocally a 'male' instrument in the late eighteenth century as the pianoforte was a 'female' one. Other acceptable instruments for men were the flute and the violoncello. The decision for a boy to take up a musical instrument was

[145] Ormathwaite MS D546/27. [146] Ormathwaite MS D546/28.
[147] Photo Eur 287; 23 Mar. 1801.

strongly influenced by family background. Despite the growing number of keen male amateur musicians, there was still no expectation that music would form part of a boy's general education, as was the case with girls. Indeed, the serious musical interests which a family with a long tradition of amateur music-making might seek to instil in its sons could come into conflict with the wider perception of music as a subject, which should not be taken seriously by men. In a remarkable letter to her husband, Lady Clive reported that she had repeatedly felt it necessary to frustrate her son's desire to learn a musical instrument:

London, 12 November 1766 Margaret Clive to Robert Clive

> I have made some progress in thorough bass, but should have made a greater had I had a band in the house. I sometimes think that I shall be able to surprise you with my music, at others that my daughters will get before me as soon as they begin, but this I know, music is and ever will be my delight. Beckey may begin very soon to play, and in time the rest. They have all three voice enough to be made to sing, and I fancy we shall not deny them that accomplishment . . . he [Edward Clive] will break up in about a month when his dancing and writing masters shall attend him. The child is always desiring me to let him learn to play on the flute or fiddle, but I for a thousand reasons notwithstanding my love of music, constantly deny him. When he is so happy as to see you, he may consult you about it, but I fear with you he has no ear. Music is not at all a necessary accomplishment for him, but I could wish him to dance well; nor is he very backward in the art, altho' we have no opinion of his ear.[148]

Although she loved music, Margaret Clive appears to have been aware of the social constraints surrounding the teaching of music to boys. She was obviously unable to bring herself to allow her son to start without obtaining the prior approval of her husband. Leppert suggests that this was nearly always the 'operative paradigm'—father to son, rather than mother to son.[149] As in other comments on musical matters, Margaret Clive displays anxiety about propriety, suggesting that, in her case at least, the existence of an ideology of gender was very much something to be taken into account, impelling her to study Italian opera 'as an act of obedience' to her husband, and, in the case of her son, to thwart his desire to take up an instrument. Yet such deference to the supposed social proprieties seems untypical. The Fowke family strongly encouraged its male members to become proficient musicians, and attempted to combat the scourge of dilettantism at every turn.

Little is known about the place of music in boarding schools for boys, which in the nineteenth century began to replace private tutors as the normal provider of education for upper-class boys. Francis Fowke sent his son to Eton, and from their letters it is possible to form some impression of musical life there. Music was clearly not part of the standard curriculum, and yet it did play some part in the social life of the school, much as was the case in the universities, and there was a band. A conflict of values seems to surface from time to time in letters exchanged between father and son. Having suffered the consequences of an inadequate practice regime during his

[148] NLW, Aberystwyth, Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 35.

[149] Leppert, *Music and Image*, 108.

early years, Francis was keen that his boy should not make the same mistake. In reply to a letter from his son asking for his 'Flagilet, books and strings', Francis sensed that his son was in danger of succumbing to the lure of an easy instrument with a trivial repertoire, and he thus urged him to keep up his violin practice:

Hertford Street, 27 February 1801 Francis Fowke to his son

> My dear Frank,
> I send you your flageolet which you desired. It goes by the Eton Coach this evening. I do not absolutely oppose your amusing yourself (tho' I am afraid you will amuse the rest of the house) with your flageolet, but I hope you will stick principally to your violin which is a noble instrument, whereas the flageolet at best is but an unrefined and trifling one. If you take pains and conquer those passages in the music you have practised with Mr Raimondi, by the time you have had a few lessons more from him, you will have got over all the irksome study of the instrument and the rest will be mere play . . . If you have a mind to exercize yourself in that way I would advise you to learn the violin cliff only, that is the one in G and practise it till you can say it pretty quick—and when you come to learn the tenor, bass and other Cliffs on your violin by and by, you will find you will be able to name them all as easily as the violin, just by taking the key of C in each of them. It is a very agreeable thing to read music readily and enables you to take a part in a Catch or Glee without the troublesome labor of learning it by heart
>
> P. S. I should think if you were to look about you, you might find some musical people in Eton to play with. You are so far advanced now that you might make yourself very useful in a Trio or Quartet and I will be bound for it, if you stick at all to your violin, in 1/2 a year you will lead the Band for them.[150]

According to Leppert, the flageolet was used principally by women, 'as a device for teaching canaries and linnets to sing'.[151] As such, it functioned pictorially as an emblem for gender. If this was a strong association, then young Francis was indeed inviting ridicule by appearing with such an instrument at Eton. Yet his father's concern appears merely musical, as he urges his son to stick with the 'noble' but time-consuming violin. Francis clearly viewed the study of the violin as a two-part process, beginning with an early 'tedious' phase requiring practice and attention to matters of technique. Regular practice was of course the key to success:

Hertford Street, 17 March 1801 Francis Fowke to his son

> Now I am got to the subject of music. I hope you do not neglect your violin. If you would only make a resolution to practise ten minutes a day you would soon get all those passages perfect that you have any difficulty in performing . . . Write to me, for I am very anxious to know that you do not neglect your music—it would be a great pity that you should even stand still when you have made so great a progress—you want but very little to have conquered all the irksome part. Tom Holland has begun to take lessons of Mr Raimondi—I have not seen Mr R. but I gather from Tom himself that he has many bad habits to get rid of.[152]

150 Fowke MS C3, 31. 151 Leppert, *Music and Image*, 150. 152 Fowke MS D13, 7.

The thought that his son might lose what it had taken him 'a good deal of time and trouble to acquire' was a troubling one. Francis urged: 'Half an hour at your present age will do more for you than five hours some years hence.'[153] To further encourage his son, Francis began to send gifts of music:

Hertford Street, 8 May 1801 Francis Fowke to his son

> I sent you some duets taken from the works of Pleyel which I should think would be pleasing enough with the flute—I hear L. H. has some by him. Let me know what your stock is or I may be sending you duplicates. In tuning to his flute make him give you the upper a, otherwise you will soon find the flute sharper than the violin for with even pretty good players the upper octaves are apt to be sharper than the lower. Tune too rather sharper than [indistinct] for the flute will soon rise, but if your Captain will take a little pains and submit to be informed by a private, he may receive considerable benefit from being told, when he is getting away from the violin both in tune and time, but if he thinks you are too young to instruct him there is an end of the matter.[154]

The context of the young Fowke boy's music-making at Eton was clearly military. As in the East India Company, violin and flute music, solos and duos, predominate in the repertoire. Francis wrote to ask for more duets, which his father duly supplied.[155] Despite parental exhortations, the summer holidays did not see an intensive period of practice by the young man:

Wimbledon, Michaelmas Day 1801 Francis Fowke to his son

> [returning after the holidays]
> Particularly I am sorry that you did not give a little more time to your music, as I think, if you were but a very little more advanced, it would be an amusement to you instead of a labour. I hope you will make up for it a little at school for after the progress you have made it is much to be regretted that [you] should stand still. I have no sort of objection to your playing country-dances if you like it, for they are very good practice, and if you want more Duets to play with L^{t} H. or any body else let me know of what sort they should be and I will get them for you . . . I have put a good stock of strings into your Violin Case which is in your box with your music and other books.[156]

From Eton, the young Francis joined the army and served in Spain. It is rather appropriate that one of the last musical references in the Fowke correspondence is to the provision of 'strings for the Spanish guitar', to be sent to the young soldier.[157]

153 Fowke MS D13, 8; 25 March 1801.
154 Fowke MS D13, 9.
155 Fowke MS D13, 11.
156 Fowke MS D13, 13.
157 Fowke MS D14, 17.

Conclusion

In this study, I have given an account of three generations of amateur musicians who spent parts of their lives in India. The question arises as to whether residence in India itself promoted the development of a distinctively Anglo-Indian musical culture. It is true that the practicalities of music-making in Calcutta were dominated by the circumstances of Indian life, the heat, the humidity, and the distance from London, but there is very little evidence that in matters of style, genre, aesthetics, and performance practice Anglo-Indians made music any differently from their contemporaries back in England. The Music of the Raj is thus best characterized as an example of provincial English culture, albeit one transplanted into a remote and exotic location, and one with unusually complex organizational requirements.

Against this background, the short period in the 1780s when there were genuine attempts to come to terms with Indian music, and even to assimilate examples of it as in the case of the 'Hindostannie' air, is of great interest. In time a closer relationship between English and Indian music might have developed through the process of acculturation (as happened in the Hispanic colonies), but it proved to be a short-lived phase, which did not engender any lasting sympathy on the part of the colonists. After the 1780s, indeed, interest in Indian music diminished fast, and the status and reputation of the nautch groups, once so fashionable in Anglo-Indian society and the principal channel of contact, declined.[1] In a remarkable gesture of support for Indian musical culture, Warren Hastings had himself sung 'Hindostannie' tunes, but no subsequent governor-general was willing to associate himself so directly with the musical arts of the subcontinent. The policy of non-interference in Indian life, long fostered by the Company, now itself came into question, and there was a growing tendency to promote the introduction of Western musical practices. As a result of its widespread use by missionaries, the harmonium, breaching what was to prove a particularly impenetrable cultural boundary, entered Indian musical tradition itself. The training of sepoy regiments on Western instruments led in due course to the bagpipes gaining a firm foothold in the Indian army.

[1] K. Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex and Class under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and their Critics, 1793–1905* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1980).

As musicians, the three generations of Fowkes lived through one of the most significant stylistic changes in the history of Western music, that from the baroque to the *galant.* One of the recurring themes of this study has been the effect that this change had on musical amateurs at grass-roots level. It is clear that for many musicians who lived through the period, the stylistic change was a profoundly unsettling development. A sharp polarization developed between those who welcomed new styles and ways of making music and those who deplored them. After decades of music-making in the English provinces, John Marsh viewed the conflict between supporters of the old and new styles as pointless and indeed damaging to the fabric of musical life, and he argued strongly for compromise. In *A Comparison between the Ancient and Modern Styles of Music* (London, 1796), he deplored the fact that it was common for amateurs 'to be prejudiced in favor of one of the two styles' and 'to reprobate the other'.[2] It was musicians of Joseph Fowke's generation, born in the 1720s and 1730s, who found the new music and its aesthetics hardest to accept. For many of that age who survived into the 1780s, antipathy to modern style became the dominant creed. A sense of musical disorientation, even alienation, is palpable in Joseph's letters from this period, with their trenchant criticisms of the contemporary musical world.

Male supporters of the 'ancient' repertoire reacted to the triumph of modern music by adopting a defensive posture. Musical societies had been growing in number and influence throughout the century, but in the 1760s and 1770s the phenomenon of the all-male musical club came to prominence. These organizations operated on the principle of limited membership, and either excluded women altogether or controlled their access through the use of ladies' nights. In Hickey's perhaps tongue-in-cheek account of the formation of the Calcutta Catch Club, the exclusion of women appears as the essential prerequisite for the dignified performance and reception of 'ancient' music. Some distinctive and ultimately influential practices, such as the insistence upon silence during performance, gained acceptance in this environment long before they did in the fashionable world of the subscription concert. For men of the older generation, some of whom like Joseph Fowke felt their own musical culture to be under threat, the Handel commemorations of the 1780s had a profound impact. Patronized ostentatiously by the monarchy and the political establishment, these gigantic musical events provided a tremendously positive affirmation of their most deeply held musical values.

If this study has demonstrated a certain defensiveness on the part of male supporters of 'ancient' music, the same cannot be said of the activities of women musicians, who were almost always unambiguously identified with the modern fashionable repertoire. In most areas of musical life, women amateurs appear strongly in the ascendant. As buyers of pianofortes, they were behind the drive to develop fashionable and technically sophisticated instruments; as performers, they were revolutionizing the ways in which music could be presented, notably in the fashionable society soirée, at which musical performance played a subsidiary part in

[2] C. Cudworth, 'An Essay by John Marsh', *Music & Letters*, 36 (1955), 155–64.

the overall social event, and in which markedly different conventions for the behaviour of performers and audience grew up. The importance of this phenomenon in the late eighteenth century has been greatly underestimated largely because of the lack of evidence. Another obvious sign of vitality was the continuing growth in the market for genres most closely associated with the requirements of women as performers, the piano solo, the piano duet, the piano trio or accompanied sonata, the concerto 'a quattro', the Italian opera air, and the national song. Even at the level of the fundamental change in musical style, the advent of the *galant*, with its emphasis on harmonic simplicity and periodic tunefulness, and its rejection of scientific learning, gave appropriate expression to views about naturalness in art and charm in performance, which were often associated particularly with women.

The very positive picture of the musical world of the woman amateur, exemplified in this study by the career of Margaret Fowke, is not easy to reconcile with some of the images of female domesticity promoted with such persistence and extremity in the courtesy book tradition. It is arguable, however, that the continuing strength of this ideological view represents not just a theoretical fear of what might happen if women were to be freed from traditional restrictions on their activities, but a reaction to what was already happening. Paintings of women posing meekly at their keyboards, surrounded by the icons of confinement like the caged bird, did indeed adorn the walls of rooms in wealthy households, but these same rooms were providing the elegant setting for the developing culture of the private concert, socially prestigious, in which women were anything but passive spectators, and were in fact often the prime movers. To downgrade this 'private' and thus often hidden musical culture involves the adoption of an anachronistic set of values. The uniquely high respect that posterity has conferred on the musical canon, largely music of 'scientific' weight in some form or other, and on performance in the public arena, would simply not have been recognized at the time.

Support for 'ancient' and modern music was influenced both by age and gender, but the significance of the latter should not be exaggerated. The third member of the Fowke family, Francis, demonstrates the obvious truth that there is no simple correlation to be made between sex and musical affiliation. Like most men of his age, he fully identified with the world of fashionable music and its manner of performance, and he comes across as an entirely comfortable denizen of the musical world of the 1790s, in a way that his father could never have been. Despite undeniable technical limitations, a growing number of men of his class were enthusiastic players, and new genres for them flourished, notably the string quartet. Different ways in which men could make music socially, for example the morning quartet party and the country weekend, in which string quartets could be combined with hunting and fishing, became very popular, and provided a relaxed environment, in which even the lowly status of the professional musician began to change.

At the heart of this study has been an account of the activities of a single musical family, and it is thus appropriate to conclude with a comment on the role of the family unit itself. Rohr's study has demonstrated conclusively that family tradition

was by far the most significant factor in the choice of a musical career.[3] It is evident that the pattern to be seen in high-profile musical dynasties such as the Bachs and the Mozarts was a common one. It is a reasonable inference, and one supported by the findings of this study, that dynasties of amateur musicians were similarly long-lasting. As a mechanism for transmitting a love of music, it is clear that the family unit almost always provided continuity, and it often acted also as a force for overt conservatism. In the case of the Fowke family, the values of the past were preserved through strict adherence to a traditional programme of music education for their children, and through an insistence on passing down from one generation to the next those elusive aspects of performance practice and style that no written description could ever adequately convey. It seems probable that the family unit also played a major part in the establishment of the canon. Without widespread support at grass-roots level, the concept of musical 'classics', timeless works to be played and enjoyed long after the deaths of their authors, could never have achieved the force that it did. Anglo-Indian families provide good examples of the implantation of this tradition. In the mid-eighteenth century, Robert and Margaret Clive were ardent enthusiasts for Handel; two generations later, the legacy of their taste, now hallowed by family tradition as well as by its established national reputation, is evident in the small collection of music at Powis Castle which includes early nineteenth-century editions of the oratorios. In the Fowke family, a period of friction in the 1780s over the merits of 'ancient' and modern music gave way in the new century to an evident rapprochement. Old and new were no longer in conflict; 'ancient' music was now an honoured part of the family's musical life. When Francis Fowke wrote to his young son at Eton in 1801 that for any composer or player to acquire 'good taste' it would be necessary to begin with Corelli and study him 'carefully', he was expressing sentiments that would have been approved warmly by his own father.

[3] D. Rohr, 'A Profession of Artisans: The Careers and Social Status of British Musicians, 1750–1850', Ph.D. thesis (University of Pennsylvania, 1983).

Appendix 1

Examples of Musical Instruments Listed in the Bengal Inventories, 1760–1785, Giving Names of Owners of Instruments Categorized by Occupation, Rank, and Gender

Name of owner	Instruments	Year
Mayor		
William Bodle	1 Harpsecorde	1765
Lieutenant-colonel		
Christian-Fischer	A Violin and Case A Chamber Organ 2 French Horns	1782
Major		
Richard Stergeon	2 Musick Books	1783
Captain		
John Wolffgang	1 Old German Flute	1757/60
Robertson	4 old fluts	1761/3
James Cannadine	a Ivory German Flute	
Charles Miller	1 Case Fidle 1 German Flute 1 Fiddle and Case	1767
Thomas Fenwick	a Hand Organ a Drum and Phife 4 Flutes 2 Bows	
Hales	2 Drums 1 Trumpet 1 Lute 2 Flutes and 1 Houtboy 2 Violins 1 Box of Musick Books	
George Ivie	1 Harpsichord 1 Ditto	
David Smith	1 Instrument Case not Compleat 1 Flute	1774
Thomas Price	1 Old Harpsichord	

Name of owner	Instruments	Year
Henry Gibson	2 Old Flutes 1 Fiddle	1776/7
Penman	1 German flute 1 German flute Broken	1778
Gaylard Roberts	1 Case with Violins with 3 Bows and some musick Books	1779
Lieutenant		
Wiggins	1 Flute	1774
Francis Moore	A German Flute Box with 2 Music Books [another flute box?] Ivory with a Musick Book	
John Bremner	1 Flute and Musick Books	
Fairfull	a Flute	1784
Henry Foules	1 Fiddle Bow and Case 5 Hawkins History Music Several Old Musick Books 2 Musicks Frames	1785
Sergeant		
George Dempster	A German Flute	1761/3
Ensign		
Joseph McDonald	1 German Flute broken	1764
John Ashwood Porter	a German Flute	1765
Surgeon		
Plenderleath	1 Flute and 1 Musick Book	1761/3
George Iustice	2 Fiddles and 1 Fiddlecase A Flute and Case	1776/7
James Kerr	9 Musick Books 7 Musick Books A Parcel of musick Books 7 Musick Books 1 Case with 1 Violin and Bow an Opera Glass 1 Fiddle and Bow 1 Box Fiddle Strings	1783
John Cheere	4 Flutes 1 Bundle Musick	1784
Ronald	Some Music Books	1785

Continued

Name of owner	Instruments	Year
Factor		
Robert Brown	3 voilens and 1 Bass Viol 2 French Horns	1765
William Steers	a German Flute 4 musick Books	1766
Writer		
Hillary van Neek Torriano	A German flute Blackwood A German flute Box 4 Musick Books 5 Musick Books 6 Musick Books 6 Musick Books 6 Musick Books An Opera Glass A Musick Book Stand	1761/3
John Wollaston	1 German Flute	1765
Fougeon	1 German Flute	1766
Musician/Music Supplier		
Francisco de Lunha	1 lott of fidle Strings 1 old German flute 1 Europe Bass with case	1766
Rudohlf Dohnstein	1 Parcell of Fiddle Strings 1 Parcell of Silver Strings for Fiddle a Quantity of Silver and other Fiddle Strings a Parcell of Fiddle Strings a Fiddle with a Spare Bow and Case a Fiddle and Case with Bow 3 Flutes and a fife 1 Hoboy and some Reeds 1 Bason and some Brass Pipes and Reeds a Parcell of Organ Pipes	
John Hedsted	a violin another d^{o} 2 French Hornes a Parcell of Violin String a German Flute a Parcell of Muz^{c} Books	1770
John Flint	1 Violin and Case Compleat 2 Veolins 7 Musick Books and Fiddle strings 1 German Flute	1772/3

Name of owner	Instruments	Year
Hendrick Pereira	1 Harpsecord	1779
	1 Violin with Sessoo Wood Box	
	1 d^{to} Europe	
	1 Tenor d^{to}	
	1 Country d^{to} with Box	
	1 d^{to} bass	
	1 Dulcimer with Case	
	1 Guitar	
	1 Violin with a Mahogany Case	
	2 German Flutes	
	1 Bassoon	
	1 Pipe and Tabor	
	10 Books of Musick for the Harpsecord	
	10 Books of Musick for the Violin or Bassoon	
	11 Books for the Flute	
	3 Bundle of first strings for the Violeen	
	1 Box with Pipe mouth	
	2 Papers of Violin Strings and 7 Bobbins	
	1 Paper of Europe strings for Tenor	
	1 d^{to} of Violins d^{to} for d^{to} 1 d^{to}	
	1 d^{to} of Second for Bass	
	1 Violin Europe Thirds	
	2 Gold Bobbin for Violin	
	3 Silver for d^{to}	
	1 Brass for d^{to}	
	2 Papers of Bass Strings 3^{d} and 4^{th}	
	Wooden Screws etc for Violins	
	A Paper of Violen String etc	
	1 Bengal Fiddle	
Tubal Mountain	1 Box with a Fidle	1781
	2 German Flutes in Bag	
	2 German Flutes	
	2 German Flutes	
	2 German Flutes	
	2 Common Flutes	
	2 Haunt Boys	
	2 Haunt Boys	
	1 Fidle Box a Lump of Rosin and 3 Bows	
	11 Musick Books Compleat	
	1 Musick Book	
Women		
Miss Amelia Campbell	1 large Violin or Gutthor [English guitar?]	1764

Continued

Name of owner	Instruments	Year
	a parcel of Musick Books	
	in a straw Basket	
Mrs Mary Handel	1 Fiddle	1771
	1 ditto	
	1 ditto with a Box	
	1 D° and some strings	
Mrs Daniel Heissards	Sundry fiddle strings	
	One Leather Fiddle case with two	
	fiddles and two sticks	
	One fiddle and fiddle sticks	
	One D° and D°	
	One Fiddle Case Containing Three Sticks	
	A Violin marked Cremona with two sticks	
	and sundry strings	
	A violin in a Case	
	A Bass Violin a D°	
	A Violin in a Case with 3 sticks	
	1 Hautboy	
	A Guittar	
Mrs Ann Dyer	1 German Flute	1775
	a Lott of Musick Bookes	
	Harpsecord	
Mary Chapman	One Organ with Five Barrels	1784
	very much out of Repair	
Inhabitants/Unknown Status		
George Dundas	A Base Viol and some Strings	1757/60
	A Violin	
	A Guitar	
	A D^{to}	
	A Fife	
	A German Flute	
John Lloyd Booth	1 Cremona Fiddle wth case	1768
	and Strings	
	1 Flute in a Case	
	1 Opera Glass	
	A Collection of Musick Books	
Edward Ward	1 Violin and Case	
	1 Violin and Case and a Flute	
	A Parcell of Musick Books	
	A Parcell of Musick Books	
	1 large Base Voil and some strings	
Francis Hare	a Harpsichord	1771/2
	a Spinett	

Name of owner	Instruments	Year
	a p^{r} French Horns 2 Flutes with spare Joints 2 Ditto with Ditto 1 Ditto 4 Hautboys	
Joseph Anigus	1 Guittar 1 Old Guittar 2 Violins in a Case 1 Old d^{o} 1 Flute a parcell of Musick Books and fiddle strings etc 1 Violoncello	1771/2
James McAndrews	3 Hautboys 3 Small Flutes 1 German Flute with 3 Middle Pieces 1 D^{to} 2 D^{to} a parcell of Musick a Bag with Sundries a Fiddle a parcell of Musick	1774/6
James Demarin	1 Gytar 1 Violin A box of Violin strings 7 Glees 1 Hand Organ 1 Large Organ 1 Harpsichord a parcell of Harpsichord strings 1 Harpsichord	1776/7
Robert Cranfurd	A Guitarre with the Case	
Henry Wedderburn	1 Pians Forle [sic] 2 Flutes Mr Wederburn Guittar and Strings Mr Wederburn Musick Books	1778
Fernando Seal	1 Violla with some Strings	1781
Charles Connell	1 pr Small Bagpipes Museek Books Music Books 1 Box with a pair of Bagpipes 1 pipe 1 fiddle and stick	1785

Appendix 2

French Horns in the Bengal Inventories 1760–1785

Year	Name	Instruments owned
1761/3	James Stephen (merchant)	2 French Horns
	John Knox (merchant)	2 French Horns 3 French Horns and 3 Trumpets 1 Lott of Flutes etc 2 French Horns 2 French Horns
	Thomas Tanner	2 French Horns
1765	Robert Brown (factor)	3 Voilens and 1 Bass Viol 2 French Horns
	John Ashwood Porter (ensign)	2 French Horons [sic]
1769	William Crawford	A French Horn
	John Suffor	a Flute 1 China flute 1 French Horn
1770	John Headstead (musician)	a violin another D° 2 French Hornes a Parcell of Violin String a German Flute a parcell of Muz^c^ Books
1771	Charles Farmer	2 French Horns
1771/2	Francis Hare	a Harpsichord a Spinett a p^r^ French Horns 2 Flutes with spare Joints 2 Ditto with Ditto 1 Ditto 4 Hautboys
1772/3	Joseph Abrasmildo	2 Clarinets compleat and 1 single with several reeds and mouthpieces for the Trumpets

Year	Name	Instruments owned
		New Concerto French Horns 2 small French Horns 2 Large D^o
1774	Samuel Finch	1 p^r of French Horns
1778	John Mennell	a p^r French horns
1779	John Slight	2 Pair French Horns 1 Violin with Case 5 Violin Bows 8 Violin Bridges 6 German Flutes 1 Gross Catgut Strings Damaged 1 Sett Harpsichord Strings 1 Small Box Guittar Strings 1 Musick Pitch
	Thomas Griffith	1 p^r French Horns
	Peter John Flor	2 French Horns
1780	George Hurst	1 p^r of French Horns
1781	John Baptist Mondezer	Two French Horns
1782	Christian Fischer (lieut-colonel)	A Violin and Case A Chamber Organ 2 French Horns
	Benjamin Webster	2 French Horns 2 French Horns 1 Violin and 3 bows Some Musick Books
1785	Augustus Cleveland	5 French Harns [sic] 5 Musick Books

Appendix 3

Subscription Series Promoted by William Bird in 1789

March 12

ACT I	
Sinfonia	Haydn
Concerto with the 'Favorite Jigg'	Corelli
Sonata, pianoforte	
Glee	
Violin concerto, with the admired air of 'Come haste to the Wedding'	
ACT II	
Overture	Handel
Quartet	Pleyel
Song	
Concerto Sinfonia	Davaux

March 26

ACT I	
Overture, for a double orchestra	Bach
Concerto, a most favourite one	Avison
Concerto, grand piano forte	
Glee	
Solo Concerto (1st), by particular desire	Syrmen
ACT II	
Overture, Ariadne	Handel
Duet, violin and cello	
Cantata, 'The Festive Board'	
Concerto (9th)	Corelli

April 9

ACT I	
Sinfonia, the celebrated one of La Chasse	Haydn
Concerto, flute	
Sonata, pianoforte	
Song	Handel
Solo concerto, violin	Guilielme
ACT II	
Overture, Samson	Handel
Quartet	Pleyel
Glee	
Concerto (12th of Op. 6)	Corelli

May 14

ACT I

Sinfonia	Haydn
Concerto, bassoon	
Trio, violin, viola, cello	Pleyel
Sonata, grand pianoforte	
Solo concerto, violin	

ACT II

Overture	Handel
Solo, cello	
Glee	
Concerto sinfonia	Davaux

October 1

ACT I

Sinfonia (2nd)	Kozeluch
Concerto, flute	Stamitz
Quintet	Pleyel
Song	
Solo, violin	Kammel

ACT II

Sinfonia	Haydn
Quartet concertante	Devienne
Overture, 'Rinaldo'	Handel

Glossary

budgerow a flat-bottomed barge without a keel with cabins to the aft. Vessels of this kind were used for the journey up the Ganges. The accommodation was sufficiently spacious to allow ladies to have a small harpsichord or pianoforte available for practice during the journey.

durwan a doorkeeper. This position was taken by a domestic servant, who was situated at the entrance to European households.

hircurra a messenger or courier. Hircurras were used to convey, among many other kinds of goods, small parcels of music or musical instruments.

moonshee a linguist or interpreter. Moonshees were employed in teaching Indian languages, and they sometimes assisted in the translation of texts for 'Hindostannie' airs.

nabob a viceroy or governor under the Mughal Emperor. The term came to signify a titled person of unspecified rank, and it was applied descriptively, and sometimes with malice or contempt, to wealthy Anglo-Indians, after their return to England.

naubat the ceremonial ensemble of the Mughals. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the East India Company sometimes employed such bands for reasons of diplomacy or prestige.

nautch a group of dancers and musicians. The term was used both as a noun and as a verb. Nautch dancers were by far the most important point of contact for Europeans with Indian musical cultures.

pulwar an Indian boat, capable of transporting between twelve and fifteen tons. Pulwars were used by Calcutta businesses to make deliveries to Anglo-Indian communities inland, close to the banks of the Ganges.

sicca rupee a pound sterling was the equivalent to about eight sicca rupees. Many European musical instruments, advertised for sale in the Calcutta newspapers, were priced in sicca rupees.

suntah burdah officially the bearer of a silver stick, who preceded the palanquin (or sedan chair). In the Fowke household, a servant entitled 'Soontah' undertook a wide range of duties.

Sources

Private letters

One uncomfortable fact confronts any scholar working in the field of eighteenth-century Anglo-Indian history—the quite extraordinary amount of paper generated both officially and in private by those involved in the growth of the British interest in India. It would not be a practical proposition to attempt to read through all the material, even of collections of central importance like the Hastings and Clive manuscripts. I have therefore taken the approach of sampling material of likely interest, and then, having identified individual correspondents, or, better still, pairs of correspondents with musical interests and the inclination to write about them, to follow these individuals up more systematically. Listed below are the main series of letters with matters of musical interest, together with a general indication of the subject matter. Material once in the India Office Library at Blackfriars is now in the new British Library in the Oriental and India Office Collections (OIOC). The other main sources are in the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth (NLW). At the time of my visit to Aberystwyth, the Powis 1990 Deposit box of Clive material was uncatalogued. Most letters were in numbered bundles, but many were loose. I have identified the bundle numbers where appropriate.

The Clive Manuscripts

1. A few letters to Mrs Clive in India (1758), including one from John Stanley's wife alluding to their musical interest in Corelli. (OIOC, G37/box 25)
2. Isolated letter from Lady Clive to General Carnac (1761) concerning her musical interests. (OIOC, B383)
3. Letters concerning the recruitment of four musicians to accompany Clive to India (1764), music on the voyage out, the desertion of the musicians at Rio de Janeiro and the repercussions. (OIOC, G37/box 4/1, 7/17, 15/1, 32, 79; D759)
4. Letters from General Carnac and Thomas Kelsall in India to Lady Clive (1763–8) concerning mutual musical interests. (NLW, Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 37)
5. List of inhabitants residing in Calcutta *c.*1766 including musicians. (OIOC, G37/box 18/9)
6. Lord Clive's expenses in India (1765–6) including occasional payments to musicians. (NLW, Clive 354)
7. Letter from Mrs Watts in India to Lady Clive (1766) asking her to commission a harpsichord. (OIOC, G37/box 38)
8. Letters from Lady Clive to Lord Clive in India (1765–7). Her musical progress, London

opera, and a musical soirée with Manzuoli and the Mozarts. (NLW, Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 35)

9. Journal of Lady Clive's expenses (1764–7) including occasional payments to musicians. (NLW, Clive 87)
10. Brief communications from John Stanley to Lord Clive (1768). (OIOC, G37/box 55)
11. Letters from Thomas Kelsall and William Harrison in India to Lady Clive (1771) about their musical progress. (NLW, Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 34)
12. Letters from Lord Clive to Lady Clive during his visit to Italy (1773–4) on Italian opera. (NLW, Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India')
13. Inventory of the Clive's Berkeley Square house (*c.*1775) taken after the death of Lord Clive. (NLW, Clive 76)
14. Inventory of missing items at Berkeley Square (*c.*1775). (NLW, Clive 78)
15. Library catalogue of Robert Clive, *c.*1776. A few music books. (NLW, Clive 67, 68)
16. Account Books of Robert Clive. Attendance at opera and oratorio, 1760–4. (NLW, Clive 17, 18, 19, 20)
17. Letters from Lady Clive, late in life (*c.*1791–1813) to her brother Nevil Maskelyne and her niece Margaret Maskelyne on her musical progress and interests. (OIOC, Photo Eur 287)

Strachey Manuscripts

Closely linked to the Clive manuscripts are the papers of his secretary Henry Strachey. These were deposited briefly in the Somerset Record Office in Taunton and then purchased by the India Office Library. To avoid confusion with the papers of another Strachey, they were designated as the Sutton Court manuscripts (F128 series).

1. Letters from Lady Clive to General Carnac (1759–66). Brief bits of musical gossip. (OIOC, F128/27)
2. A Letter from Lady Clive in France to Henry Strachey (1768) concerning music to be sent to her. (OIOC, F128/93)
3. A Letter from Lady Clive to Henry Strachey, alluding briefly to a holiday in Eastbourne (1781) where they met Mr and Mrs Joah Bates. (OIOC, F128/94)

The Fowke/Ormathwaite Manuscripts

The Fowke correspondence is held in two collections in the India Office Library: the Fowke manuscripts and the Ormathwaite manuscripts (D546 series). The Fowke manuscripts are described in some detail in: G. R. Kaye and E. H. Johnston, *India Office Library: Catalogue of Manuscripts in European Languages*, vol. ii, part 2, *Minor Collections and Miscellaneous Manuscripts* (London, 1937). The Ormathwaite manuscripts are listed (without detail of their contents) in a typescript catalogue available in the Oriental and India Office Collections at the British Library. The two series complement each other exactly. In addition, there are small but important collections of Fowke letters in the Powis 1990 Deposit and the Ormathwaite series at Aberystwyth.

1. Early letters (up to 1778) to and from Margaret, her father, her brother, her uncle John Walsh, her guardian Mrs Kitchen, Mrs Moore, and others include occasional references to her early progress in music and her initial impressions of musical life in Calcutta. (OIOC, F2, D546/14)
2. Letters from Mrs Moore and Mrs Evans to Margaret (*c.*1780–1) with sporadic requests for music. (OIOC, E9)
3. Letters from Margaret to her brother from the time of his reinstatement at Benares until

she joined him (1783) and during his absence in Calcutta to take an oath (1785). A lengthy and detailed commentary on her musical progress and descriptions of her concert parties. (OIOC, E4, D546/30)

4. Letters to Margaret from Joseph and other correspondents (including Lady Chambers, Mrs von Danckleman, Mrs Plowden, Mrs Wheeler, Sir William Jones and Lady Jones) from the time of her departure for Benares (1783–5). Up-to-date reports on music in Calcutta. Sophia Plowden's interests in Indian music. Joseph Fowke's interests in ancient music. (OIOC, F3, E4, E5)
5. Letters from Joseph to Francis in Benares (1783–5). The doings of professional musicians in Calcutta. His interests in ancient music. (OIOC, E6)
6. Letters from Francis to Margaret during his visit to Calcutta to take an oath (1785). His social life at musical parties. (OIOC, E7, D546/26)
7. Letters to Francis from the firm of Paxton, Cockrell and Delisle (1785). The supply of musical instruments. (OIOC, D12)
8. An exchange of letters between Margaret and Warren Hastings (1785). Her gift of a book of 'Hindostannie Airs'. General attitudes to music. (OIOC, D546/25)
9. Letters from Margaret, Joseph, and Lady Chambers to Lady Clive (1785–6). An important account of the collection of Hindostannie Airs. Details of Margaret's impending return to England and her engagement. (NLW: Powis 1990 Deposit, box marked 'Clive of India', bundle 30)
10. Letters from Margaret and her husband John Benn to Francis during their Grand Tour of Europe and a few from John Benn to John Walsh (1788–9). Descriptions of musical life. Margaret's pianoforte practice. Her miscarriage. (OIOC, E8, D546/31, D546/32; NLW, Ormathwaite, FE2/1)
11. Letters from Francis to Margaret and her husband during their Grand Tour (including a few from Paris visited by Francis in 1788) and after their return (1788–92). A night at the Paris Opera. Descriptions of amateur musical life in London. Fashionable pianoforte music for Margaret. (OIOC, D546/26)
12. Letters to Francis from his musical friends Davenport, Cipriani, and Morse and from his music teacher F. Bianchi (1790–2, 1804–9). Brief comments on their music-making. Music lessons. (OIOC, E9, E10)
13. Letters from Francis to Margaret (1802–5, 1807–12). The musical progress of their children. (OIOC, D546/27, D546/28, D546/29)
14. Letters between Francis and his son Francis at Eton (1801). Advice on practice and music. (OIOC, D14, C3)
15. Letters between Francis and members of his family (1813). Musical instruments. (OIOC, D14)
16. Letters between Margaret and her daughter Elizabeth. Piano practice. (NLW, Ormathwaite, G1, G6)
17. Diary of Elizabeth Walsh, 1808–14. Brief comments on piano lessons and concert attendance. (NLW, Ormathwaite, FG2/1)
18. Specimens of Anglo-Indian poetry with musical themes, *c.*1785. (NLW, Ormathwaite, FB3)

Plowden Manuscripts

1. Diary of Sophia Plowden (Mrs Richard Chicheley Plowden) before, during and after a voyage up the Ganges to Lucknow (1787–8). The collection of Hindostannie Airs. (OIOC, F127/94)

2. Loose letter from Sophia Plowden to her sister Lucy (1783). A detailed description of a musical masquerade at which she and her friends performed as Indian musicians. (OIOC, B187)
3. Book of arrangements of Indian songs compiled under the direction of Sophia Plowden (1787). (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, MS 380)

Chambers Manuscripts

1. Brief notes of Lady Frances Chambers' concert attendances in Calcutta (1784) in a printed almanac. (OIOC, A172)

Hastings Manuscripts

1. William Hamilton Bird writes to present Warren Hastings with a copy of his 'Oriental' music. (BL, Add. MS 29171, fo. 363)
2. A report sent to Hastings by George Bogle from Bhutan (1780) concerning an Indian instrument. (BL, Add. MS 29233, fo. 106)
3. Inventory of Hastings' furniture at Daylesford House (1799) including his harpsichord. (BL, Add. MS 41609)
4. Sale of Hastings' effects (1785) upon his departure from India, including his organ. (BL, Add. MS 29229)

Francis Manuscripts

Musical references in the published material, J. Parkes and H. Merivale, *Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis* (London, 1867) and B. Francis and E. Keary, *The Francis Letters* (London, n.d.) may be supplemented from the following:

1. The journal and letters of Alexander Mackrabie, which contain interesting but brief comments on catch singing and private concerts. (OIOC, E15, E22)
2. The letters of Mrs Francis which contain occasional references to music. (OIOC, E22)
3. Occasional comments on opera by the Francis girls. (BL, Add. MSS 40762–3)

Powys Manuscripts

1. Brief details of musical instruments to be sent to India for Lord Clive's family (*c.*1802). (OIOC, Neg 4383)

Ducarel Manuscripts (Gloucestershire Record Office)

1. Letters from James Ducarel to his mother. Brief references to music. (D2091/F9)
2. Letters from Gerard Gustavus Ducarel to his mother. A letter commenting on new keyboard music, and a letter describing music at Lady Clive's house. (D2091/F10)

Inventories of goods

Wills and inventories of the goods of Europeans who died in India in the jurisdiction of the East India Company (the so-called 'Bengal Inventories') contain valuable evidence concerning the ownership of musical instruments and music. The series relating to the Mayor's Court of Calcutta (P154 and P155 series) encompass the years 1757–79. The writers employed to list the effects of deceased persons were pedantic to an unusual but most useful degree. In a few instances individual items in large collections of music are listed. In 1780 the Calcutta Supreme Court took over this function (L/AG/34/27) series). The practice of documenting goods in such detail quickly declined, which is hardly surprising, given the rapid rise in

Calcutta's population at this period. There thus appears to be a sudden drop in the ownership of musical instruments, which is highly unlikely, given the growth of prosperity in late eighteenth-century Calcutta. Any statistics compiled across the watershed of 1780 would therefore appear to be meaningless, and I have made use of the P154 and P155 series for detailed statistical analysis.

P154/61	(1757–60)
P154/62	(1761–3)
P154/63	(1764)
P154/64	(1765)
P154/65	(1766)
P154/66	(1767)
P154/67	(1768)
P154/68	(1769)
P154/69	(1770)
P154/70	(1771)
P155/1	(1772)
P155/2	(1773)
P155/3	(1774)
P155/4	(1774–6)
P154/56	(1775)
P154/58	(1776–7)
P154/59	(1778)
P154/60	(1779)
L/AG/34/27	(1780)
L/AG/34/27	(1781)
L/AG/34/27	(1782)
L/AG/34/27	(1783)
L/AG/34/27	(1784)

Newspapers

No newspapers were published in Calcutta until 1780 when the *India Gazette or Calcutta Public Advertiser* was founded. In 1784 it was joined by *The Calcutta Gazette or Oriental Advertiser*. The musical coverage of both papers developed quickly along traditional lines, reflecting the steady growth of the public concert during the 1780s and 1790s, first by printing calls for subscriptions, then by giving details of concert programmes, initially in outline only but later in detail, and finally by publishing a few concert reviews. The newspapers are also the main source of evidence of how instruments and music were supplied to European inhabitants of the city.

Published Editions of 'Hindostannie' Airs

Arrangements of Indian tunes were first published as separate collections. Later selected specimens were incorporated into larger collections of 'national' airs, such as the comprehensive collection of Edward Jones.

Biggs, E., *Twelve Hindoo Airs: with English Words Adapted to them by Mr Opie, and Harmonized for One, Two or Three Voices* (London, n.d.).

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